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TITLES AND OFFICES

OF OUR

LORD JESUS CHRIST:

ILLUSTRATED IN A

SERIES OF ESSAYS.

BY

ISABELLA GRAY MYLNE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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PART VI.

TITLES EXPRESSIVE OF THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS BESTOWED BY CHRIST ON HIS PEOPLE, THROUGH THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

ESSAY XXV.

THE LAST ADAM—COVENANT OF THE PEOPLE—EVERLASTING FATHER—TESTATOR.

We have lately viewed Redemption as the subject of a Covenant between the sacred Persons of the glorious Trinity; in virtue of which, the Son became a Servant, that he might mediate a covenant between the Father and his chosen people. We have seen that the Son is so entirely the Substance and Centre of that covenant, as to be styled, The Covenant; 'I will give thee for a covenant of the people.'

We proceed now to view the Divine Mediator more directly under this character, of Covenant-Head to his people, or, The Last Adam. A covenant between beings of the same nature, is a mutual agreement, whereby each party stipulates to receive certain benefits, on the performance of certain annexed conditions. But in a cove-

nant between the infinite God and his dependant creatures, all the benefit is on their side, all the power to perform conditions on His; it is a covenant of infinite power and goodness on one side, and of infinite obligation on the other. It is therefore in great condescension that God deals with men by covenant transactions and engagements, and not merely by commands and sanctions. The *first* covenant made with man was so far an exception to this rule, that man then *had power* to perform the stipulated condition: but this power he derived solely from his Maker; and ever since the breach of that first covenant, man has lost both power and will to perform any conditions.

When God in mercy resolved to make a *second* covenant with man, it was therefore necessary that he should appoint for him a Covenant-Head both *able and willing* to perform its conditions for and in him; and such a Head could be found in no created order of beings: the eternal Son alone was qualified for the office; the Father appointed him to it; and he most willingly undertook it. The reason, then, why Christ is called 'The Second Man,' or 'The Last Adam,'[1] is, that he resembles Adam in being the *Federal Head* or *Representative* of his people, his spiritual seed. Although in most respects Adam was opposite to Christ, in *this* 'he was a figure of Him that was to come,' that he acted as surety and covenant-head of his posterity; and conveyed *all that was his* to all related and belonging to him. But to prevent mistakes, we mention here, at the outset, that Adam and Christ did not represent the same body of people. Adam stood for the whole human race, and conveyed *all that was his* to the whole race. Christ stands only for his elect peo-

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 45–47.

ple, and conveys *all that is his* to those only who are by faith united and related to him.

These two covenant-heads are brought forward, in their resemblance and in their opposition, only in two chapters of the Bible; viz. the fifth of Romans, and the fifteenth of First Corinthians; but, to explain the covenants made with them respectively, and the consequences flowing from each, forms the sum and substance of the Bible, from beginning to end. For, what is the object of God's revelation to man, but to teach him what he has lost in Adam, and what he may regain in Christ,—to teach him how

> 'Adam the Second, from the dust
> 'Raises the ruins of the First.'

In order, then, to form any correct notions of the covenant made with Christ, we must understand that which was made with Adam. On this deep and mysterious subject, we shall not trust to our own limited knowledge and feeble light; but borrow occasionally the words of those 'godly and judicious divines,' who compiled the standards of the Church of Scotland; or, as they were originally styled, '*A part of the covenanted uniformity in* '*Religion betwixt the Churches of Christ, in the Kingdoms* '*of Scotland, England, and Ireland.*' To describe the covenant made with Adam we quote the words of the 'Larger Catechism.' Having stated the original perfection of man's nature, that 'God created them male and 'female, endued them with living, reasonable, and im-'mortal souls, made them after his own image, in know-'ledge, righteousness, and holiness; having the law of 'God written in their hearts, and power to fulfil it, 'yet subject to fall,'—the Catechism proceeds in these terms:—'God entered into a covenant of life with him,

'on condition of perfect, personal, and perpetual obe-
'dience, of which the Tree of Life was the pledge; and
'forbidding to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good
'and evil. Our first parents, being left to the freedom
'of their own will, through the temptation of Satan,
'transgressed the commandment of God, in eating the
'forbidden fruit; and thereby fell from the estate of in-
'nocency wherein they were created. The covenant
'being made with Adam, as a public person, not for
'himself alone, but for his posterity, all mankind, de-
'scending from him by ordinary generation, sinned in
'him, and fell with him, in that first transgression.'

It is true, there is no intimation given, in the few sad sentences which record Adam's sin and fall, that he acted as a public person, the representative of the whole human race; and that all his posterity sinned in him, and fell with him. He is addressed as an individual, both in the denunciation before his fall, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;'[1] and in the sentence which followed the fatal deed, 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: Cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.'[2] It is readily granted, that the federal character of Adam is not here explained, as we find it in systems of Divinity. It is one of the peculiarities of the Sacred Volume, that it does not teach systematically; but, that to under-

[1] Gen. ii. 17. [2] Gen. iii. 17–19.

stand it aright, we must compare one part with another. Our Catechism, accordingly, directs us to compare the account of Adam's sin and fall, in the Book of Genesis, with St Paul's account of the *effects* of the fall, in his Epistle to the Romans. In the fifth chapter of this Epistle, from verse 12th to 20th, we find the mortality and depravity of all mankind directly traced to Adam's first transgression; and, although the Apostle uses repetition, to enforce beyond doubt a truth he knew to be so offensive to the proud heart of man, it is remarkable, that he does not state it as a point *to be established*, but draws from it, as from a point *already established*, arguments for the security of the Covenant of Grace. 'Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,' &c. 'For if through the offence of one, many be dead; much more,' &c. 'For if by one man's offence, death reigned by one; much more,' &c. 'Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so,' &c. 'For, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one,' &c. Another passage from the writings of St Paul bears directly on this point;—'For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'[1] We have, then, the express authority of Scripture for asserting, that Adam's fall brought all mankind into a state of sin, condemnation, and death; and that in this dreadful word *death* is included much more than the death of the body, is evident, both from the event in Adam's own case, and from what is said of the state of his posterity in every part of Scripture. The threat denounced against

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22.

Adam was, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely *die*.' Now, we know that he did not on that day suffer *temporal* death; but it is evident that on that day he became *spiritually* dead, and exposed to God's dreadful wrath, which is *eternal* death.

Comparing this event of the fall in Adam's case, with the natural state of every one of his children, as described by St Paul, in Eph. ii. 2–5, we are bound to infer, that, in the denunciation, '*Thou shalt surely die*,' was involved death, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, to Adam and all his posterity, as long as they should continue under a Covenant of Works. The passage we refer to in Ephesians, throws light upon that referred to in Romans fifth, by explaining the twofold sense in which '*many were made sinners*;' they became '*children of wrath*,' by *imputed* guilt; and '*dead in trespasses and sins*,' serving the devil, the world, and their own sinful lusts, by *inherent* and *actual* guilt. From these Scripture proofs, it is evident that our Catechism does not strain the doctrine of Original Sin, in stating the effects of the fall as follows,—'The fall brought mankind into 'an estate of *sin* and *misery*. The *sinfulness* of that 'estate whereinto man fell, consisteth in the guilt of 'Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness where-'in he was created, and the corruption of his nature, 'whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made 'opposite to all that is spiritually good, and wholly in-'clined to evil, and that continually, which is common-'ly called Original Sin, and from whence do proceed all 'actual transgressions. The *misery* of that estate which 'the fall brought upon mankind, consisteth in the loss 'of communion with God, his displeasure and curse; so 'as we are by nature children of wrath, bond-slaves to 'Satan, and justly liable to all punishments, in this

'world and that which is to come.' That *all* were *included* in the First Covenant, is proved by *all* being manifestly *under the sentence* inflicted for the breach of it. For the righteous God would not inflict punishment upon those who were unconcerned in the offence. This is an awful doctrine; we quote, concerning it, the remarks of an able commentator,[1] not venturing to make any ourselves. 'If men find fault with what God has evi-'dently done, let them answer it to him. He deigns 'not to apologize for his own conduct; and, with our 'dark and imperfect views, we shall be deemed too offi-'cious if we attempt it. "Shall not the Judge of all 'the earth do right?" seems the proper answer to ob-'jectors; and to wait for a world of clearer light, is our 'proper behaviour. Many things have been copiously 'and plausibly argued upon these topics; but it is readi-'ly granted, that great difficulties remain: it becomes 'us, and it is honourable to God, when we adore the 'depths which we cannot fathom, and believe that while '"clouds and darkness are round about him, righteous-'ness and judgment are the basis of his throne." Man's 'mortality and depravity, as well as universal history, 'coincide with and confirm the Scriptural account of this 'transaction; and, as collateral evidences, prove that it 'is the "testimony of God," and that we do not mis-'take its meaning: on this ground Faith receives it; 'and humbled Reason submits to her Teacher, God, 'and allows his righteousness, though she cannot fully 'comprehend it.'

Let us now examine, a little more closely, the evidences of man's sinful and miserable state; as we find them in Scripture, in universal history, and by personal observation and experience. And, *first*, of his *sinful*

[1] Scott, Notes on Gen. ii. 16, 17.

state, as *described in Scripture*;—'When men began to multiply on the face of the earth,' sin multiplied also to such a horrible extent, that it is recorded, after the manner of human expression, 'It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.' For this was his character in the eyes of HIM who cannot err, 'God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.'[1] And, after the Flood, the same character is ascribed to him, 'The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.'[2] Throughout the whole Bible, man's heart and life are described as 'desperately wicked,'[3] by historians, by prophets, by apostles, and by the Redeemer himself. St Paul corroborates the testimony of David, as equally true in his day,—'There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.'[4] The emphatic question of Jeremiah shows, in a very strong light, the desert of every man,—'Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?'[5] As if he had said, 'The wages of sin is death;' every man has earned these wages, even eternal death: as long, therefore, as he is in the land of the living and in the place of hope, he has no ground of complaint; his sufferings, however severe and complicated, are less than he deserves; and even when cast into everlasting fire, he will have no just complaint against the God of heaven and earth.

The *misery* of man's estate is set forth in Scripture, no less plainly than its sinfulness. Job says, 'Man that

[1] Gen. vi. 1–7. [2] Gen. viii. 21. [3] Jer. xvii. 9; Mat. xv. 19.
[4] Rom. iii. 10–12, from Ps. xiv. & liii. [5] Lam. iii. 39.

is born of a woman, is of few days, and full of trouble.'[1] His friend Eliphaz says, 'Although affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground; yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward.'[2] But it may be said, that we have selected an extreme case: Job's extraordinary afflictions gave a peculiar cast of melancholy to his own views and those of his friends. Let us then inquire the opinion of one who had better opportunities of judging what happiness is to be enjoyed on earth; who had unlimited power to gratify his desires, and greater prosperity than any man ever had, before or after him. Let us hear his own confession,—'I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly:[3] whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy; for my heart rejoiced in all my labour.'[4] And what was the result of these searches after earthly bliss?—'I hated life; because the work that is wrought under the sun is grievous unto me: for all is vanity and vexation of spirit:'[5] 'for what hath man of all his labour, and of the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath laboured under the sun? For all his days are sorrows, and his travail grief; yea, his heart taketh not rest in the night. This also is vanity.'[6] 'I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.'[7]

But it may be again objected, that we have not taken a fair specimen. It was not surprising that Solomon looked with disgust on the joys of life, after abusing them as he did in his latter years. We will then inquire of 'Moses, the man of God,' what were his views of man's estate.—'We are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath

[1] Job xiv. 1. [2] Job v. 6. [3] Eccles. i. 17.
[4] Eccles. ii. 10. [5] Eccles. ii. 17. [6] Eccles. ii. 22, 23.
[7] Eccles. i. 14.

are we troubled. Thou hast set our iniquities before thee, our secret sins in the light of thy countenance. For all our days are passed away in thy wrath: we spend our years as a tale that is told.'[1] But lastly, it may be said, all these verdicts were given before the introduction of the Christian dispensation. The true follower of Jesus may surely expect some exemption from this general misery. It is true, the follower of Jesus has consolations which more than compensate for all his griefs; but to him, expressly, his Lord has said, 'In the world ye shall have tribulation.'[2]

The *sin* and *misery* of man's estate are abundantly evidenced also by *universal history*. The first man born of woman, envied, hated, and slew his brother; was unbelieving, disobedient, and rebellious towards his Maker. And, alas! his character has proved the type of a large portion of mankind ever since. For, what is history, in general, but a record of the various ways in which nations and individuals have hated and destroyed one another,—a series of acts of treachery, rapine, cruelty, and slaughter, producing miseries innumerable,—a record of the various ways which man has devised to rebel against his God, and bring down upon himself His awful judgments?

And is it in *past* history only that these dismal effects of the fall are to be traced? Alas! the history of each passing day furnishes an epitome of the records of ages. For if we cast our eye over a Daily Register of events, public and private, sin and misery meet it at every glance. In proportion as human beings are collected together, and brought into close contact, sin and misery are found to prevail; so that those whose duty does not lead them to explore the crowded abodes of wretchedness in large cities, can have but faint ideas of what the be-

[1] Ps. xc 7-9. [2] John xvi. 33.

nevolent visitor must suffer, in witnessing the combination and re-action of sin and misery amongst those whom he goes to relieve.

But where is the happy family, or the favoured individual, that is free from sin and its consequent misery? Every thing on earth bears the stamp of God's displeasure and curse. It is true, the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord, and this goodness is enhanced by the consideration of our utter unworthiness. Innumerable blessings, and comforts, and joys, are bestowed upon us, for which our constant gratitude is due. But upon each of these is inscribed 'Vanity and vexation of spirit;' and the more precious they are, the sorer is the pang that rends our heart when deprived of them, which we know may be our lot, any day, any hour. Every relation and every occupation of life exposes us both to sin and suffering. In every joy is hidden a snare, to avoid which we require constant help from above; in every employment, whether social or solitary, we are exposed to temptation. Our bodies are liable to pain and disease in infinite variety and degree; our minds to diseases still more dreadful. Every thing 'we fondly call our own' may, on a moment's warning, be snatched from our side; and even in the full enjoyment of temporal blessings, there is a want, a satiety, a blank, 'the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.' A large portion of mankind spend their lives in labour and sorrow; and those who are exempted from actual suffering, generally make for themselves cares and anxieties, which equalize their lot with the poor man's.

We have already said too much to prove, what every one already knows, that

> 'Ills on ills, by Heaven's decree,
> 'In man's estate are found.'

The event which terminates his earthly existence, although a blessing to the believer, is yet strongly marked with God's wrath and curse. The soul and body, during life such close companions, are separated, often with agonies and terrors; the soul to depart for a region unknown, except by the light of revelation,—the body to sink out of sight in humiliating dissolution and corruption. The miseries that await sin in the world to come are at present hid from our senses, and from our understandings; but a foretaste of them has sometimes been felt even here, by the hardened infidel, and the proud blasphemer, when the horrors of conscience have overtaken them; convincing themselves and all around them that there is such a thing as hell-fire.

Outward evils all men feel keenly; but there is another class of punishments, consequent upon the fall, which are little felt and complained of, because insensibility is generally combined with them. We allude to the inward punishments of blindness of mind to comprehend the gospel, corrupt inclinations and passions, delusions to believe a lie, hardness of heart, and proneness to yield to temptation. It may seem paradoxical, but it is nevertheless true, that the inward effects of the fall are never keenly felt, nor deeply lamented, till we are in some measure delivered from them. Blindness of mind is not perceived till the eyes of the understanding have begun to be opened: Satan's chain is not felt irksome till we begin to try and move in the service of God: the stony heart gives no pain till part of it is turned to flesh; and then, as an old author says, 'The 'stone grates against the flesh, and makes it bleed:' sinful passions are not hated and mourned over till we begin to resist them: loss of communion with God cannot be a felt misery till we have tasted something of the

sweetness of his presence and favour. Hence it follows, that while the Christian 'sighs and cries' over the abominations committed in the world around him, *it is in his own experience* that he sees most clearly, and feels most painfully, the sad effects of the fall. Looking back upon his unrenewed state, he sees it to have been death in trespasses and sins, utter indisposition, inability, and opposition, to all that is spiritually good, and inclination to all evil; and that continually. Moral dispositions he may have had which were useful and pleasing to man; but no desire for communion with his Maker; on the contrary, he hid himself under the shade of worldly cares and employments, worldly companions, and religious forms, whenever the voice of the Lord called him into his immediate presence; conscious guilt made him shun the face of God as that of an incensed Judge; or indifference made him neglect the call of God as that of a Stranger.

And even now, when he is in some degree renewed after the image of God, 'in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness;' now that he can look to God as to a reconciled Father and Friend, and truly desires to be conformed to 'all that is spiritually good,' he still finds sin dwelling in him, hindering him in every duty, and consequently mingling with misery even his holiest joys. Communion with God is now, indeed, his chief joy and delight; but when he would rise to heaven, he finds 'twice ten thousand ties' binding him down to earth. Often, alas! he has not even a desire to rise; enmity and indifference towards God are not yet rooted out of his heart; nor will they be entirely eradicated as long as he is mortal. Hard thoughts of his gracious Lord at one time, conscious guilt not freely confessed at another, indolence and careless walking at many times, keep him

at a distance from God, and therefore at a distance from happiness; and secret declensions, if not open and manifest backsliding, make him often cry out, 'Oh! wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?'

We have now brought to a conclusion the painful part of our task,—that of tracing the Covenant made with, and broken by, the first Adam, with the ruinous effects of his fall. We joyfully turn to the part which remains,—that of tracing the Covenant made with, and ever to be kept by, the LAST ADAM, with the blessed results of His obedience and faithfulness.

But before examining the Covenant itself, we must dwell for a little upon the qualifications which fitted our Divine Surety to perform its conditions for his people, upon his resemblance to, yet superiority over, the first Adam, and upon the manner in which he performed that part of which Earth was the scene. As the first Adam was '*made of the red earth*' (the literal meaning of his name), so the Last Adam assumed an earthly frame; yet he was not of the earth, earthy, but THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. Adam was *made* in the image of God, after his likeness; Jesus *was from everlasting* the express IMAGE OF THE FATHER, THE BRIGHTNESS OF HIS GLORY. Adam had the law of God written in his heart, and power to fulfil it; Jesus, in an infinitely higher sense, had the law of God written in his heart, and power to fulfil it; but there was this essential difference,—Adam was *subject to fall;* Jesus *could not fall.* As the first Adam was placed under a Covenant of Works, so also, as far as he was *personally* concerned, was the Last Adam. He was required to render 'personal, perfect, and perpetual obedience,' in a state of trial and temptation. But how in-

comparably greater were the temptations which assailed him, than that which overcame the First Adam! He, amid innumerable gratifications, had only to submit to a single act of self-denial. Jesus had to suffer unceasing privations, with scarce one outward comfort to sweeten them. As far as we know, the Tempter prevailed in his first attempt on Adam's fidelity; and having succeeded so easily in that instance, he tried all his arts to seduce the Second Man, but in vain. He could not inject into His pure mind one unholy or sinful thought; but was made to experience the fulfilment of the sentence, 'It shall bruise thy head.' Our Surety fulfilled, in his own *person*, *perfect* obedience, thereby bringing in for his people *perpetual*, yea 'everlasting righteousness.' But the Covenant of Works, under which he *personally* stood, required him, not only to *perform perfect obedience*, but to *suffer the punishment of disobedience*, incurred by those whom he represented. In other words, he had undertaken to bear the curse for his people, and severely he did bear it in all its parts, as expressed in its first denouncement. He *ate bread in sorrow all the days of his life;* he *sweat* great drops of blood; he *suffered death*, in a way accounted cursed by the Law. Yea, he was dealt with as *accursed* by his heavenly Father, being, as it were, *driven out* of his presence for a season.[1]

As the Last Adam, our blessed Lord is not only the Covenant-Head of his people, but their FATHER; for to Him belongs the glorious title, 'EVERLASTING FATHER.'[2] At first sight, this title seems to belong to God the Father; and we would carefully avoid swelling our list of the Saviour's titles by the addition of any one not strictly applicable to him. But we have abundant warrant in Scripture for applying to him the name before us. The

[1] Gen. iii. 17 24. [2] Is. ix. 6.

place it occupies, among the names to be given to the *Child born*, the *Son given*, would alone justify its application to Immanuel; but we have many other warrants in Scripture. In Isaiah 53d, for instance, the redeemed of Messiah are called '*his seed.*' In the 59th of the same prophecy, the Father covenants with the Son to put his Spirit, not upon himself only, but upon his '*seed*,' and his '*seed's seed;*' and St Paul, by the connexion in which he quotes the words of Isaiah, in chapter eighth, relative primarily to the prophet himself and his children, proves that they were spoken prophetically by the Redeemer, relative to himself and his spiritual offspring.[1] Jesus, then, is not ashamed to call us his *children*, as well as his brethren; the children whom, by solemn covenant, God has given him. Again, the covenant made with David, for himself and his posterity, typified that made with Christ, for himself and his people, under the relation of *children to a Father*. This is especially evident in the 89th Psalm.

The title Everlasting Father seems nearly synonymous with that in the New Testament, 'Author of Eternal Salvation;'[2] denoting that, as our first parent conveyed natural life to his posterity, but could not convey that which he had himself lost, spiritual life,—'the Second Man' conveys to his seed life spiritual and eternal. To this agree the words of our catechism, 'The Covenant 'of Grace was made with Christ, as the Second Adam, 'and in him with all the elect, as his seed.'

This title is, by some able commentators, rendered, 'The Father of the World to Come.' Of this rendering, Lowth remarks, 'I can't but have a particular 'regard for it, because I am persuaded it is from the au-'thority of this text (Is. ix. 6.) that the kingdom of the

[1] Heb. ii. 12, 13; Is. viii. 18. [2] Heb. v. 9.

'Messias is called in the New Testament, by the title of '"*The Age or World to Come.*"'

Let us now come, with humble and teachable hearts, to the consideration of this blessed Covenant; viewing it first, compared with other covenants, as the *New*, or *Better* Covenant; and afterwards, as explained in Scripture, by the terms Covenant of God's Peace, the Covenant of Promise, the Holy Covenant, the Everlasting Covenant, or, as expressed by divines, 'The Covenant of Grace.'

First, in what sense is it called the *New* or *Better* Covenant?[1] Not in respect of its date; for it was planned from everlasting, and revealed to Adam immediately after his fall.[2] It was confirmed to Noah, the second Father of the human race, and sealed by the sign of the rainbow.[3] It was very solemnly made with Abraham, the father of the faithful, and sealed by the sign of circumcision.[4] It was ratified anew to Isaac and Jacob; and typified in the national covenant made with Israel;[5] which, as we have before remarked, partook of the nature both of the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace; the temporal blessings suspended on national obedience resembling the former; the ceremonial rites being lively emblems, and to the faithful, effectual means of enjoying the latter. Now, it is compared with this *national* covenant, that the Christian dispensation is termed the *New* Covenant; not in contra-distinction to the Covenant of Works, nor to that made with the patriarchs; for, 'There are not therefore two covenants of 'grace, differing in substance, but one and the same, 'under various dispensations.'[6] The New Covenant, then, differs from the Old, in that by it the law of God

[1] Heb. viii. 6, 13. [2] Gen. iii. 15. [3] Gen. vi. 18.
[4] Gen. xvii. [5] Exod. vi. 4; Deut. v. 2.
[6] Confession of Faith.

is written, not on tables of stone, but on the tablet of the heart; it is now a *Testament*,[1] sealed by the blood of the Testator, made *new* by his actual death and sufferings, the benefits of which, under the *old* covenant, were enjoyed by anticipation. And how precious was the legacy which the Redeemer bequeathed to his children, when he took the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the New Testament (or covenant) in my blood, which is shed for you.'[2] And how grateful should we be for having our lot cast in the clearer light and richer dispensation of the New Testament!

We come at length to the immediate study of that Covenant of which Christ is the Head. And, as we have done in the former part of this Essay, we shall follow our Catechism, as it follows Scripture. 'God doth 'not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and 'misery into which they fell by the breach of the first 'covenant, commonly called the *Covenant of Works;* 'but, of his mere love and mercy, delivereth his elect out 'of it, and bringeth them into an estate of salvation by 'the second covenant, commonly called the *Covenant of* '*Grace.* The grace of God is manifested in the second 'covenant, in that he freely provideth and offereth to 'sinners a Mediator, and life, and salvation by him; 'and *requiring faith* as the condition to interest them in 'him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his 'elect, to *work in them that faith* with all other saving 'graces; and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as 'the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness 'to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them 'to salvation.'

This view entirely accords with Scripture, although the term *Covenant of Grace* is not found there. When

[1] Heb. vii. 22.; ix. 15–20. [2] Luke xxii. 20.

the Lord Jesus said, ‘ God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,’[1] he preached the *Covenant of Grace.* For he taught that by nature, all men *deserved* to perish, and might justly have been left so to do; that God's free *love* or mercy found out a plan of redemption for them; and this, through his Son, as a Covenant-Head, to convey *life* everlasting; that this life was offered to the whole *world;* but that none would benefit by it, except those who *believed.* That the second covenant is entirely of grace is manifest from *faith* being the only condition required; for it is the character of faith to have nothing of its own, but to receive every thing from God, as his free gift; ‘ *therefore*, it is of faith, that it might be by grace.’[2] But the freeness of the covenant is still further manifest, in that this only *condition* is itself the *gift* of God,—‘ By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.’[3]

From the view already given of the desert of man, since his forfeiture of the first covenant, it is evident that any overture of peace, or even of mitigated wrath, on the part of his offended God, would have been a *Covenant of Grace.* But, in this blessed charter are contained not only pardon, but the imputation of perfect righteousness; not only deliverance from the wrath of God, but access into a state of favour, acceptance, and friendship with him; not only freedom from eternal misery, but the gift of eternal bliss; with the foretaste of it, in present sanctification and fellowship with the Lord. The covenant, then, by which God binds himself to confer all these rich and immortal blessings on his creatures, may well be termed the Covenant of Grace.

[1] John iii. 16. [2] Rom. iv. 16. [3] Eph. ii. 8.

Were we to trace this covenant in all its ramifications, we must illustrate the source whence it flows, the channel through which it is conveyed, the condition whereby we become interested in it, with the source whence this condition itself proceeds, and all the effects of becoming interested in it, such as reconciliation, justification, sanctification, in all its branches;—in short, all spiritual blessings which flow from union with God in Christ, in the present life, and all the glory which shall be enjoyed in more intimate union with God in the life to come. For the whole of Christianity is involved in what, by this covenant, *God in Christ* becomes to *man*, and *man in Christ* becomes to *God*. Christ, as the Head of the Covenant, is the grand Centre of union, in whom God and redeemed sinners meet, to the glory of the Godhead, and the eternal salvation of the elect.

But, purposing to illustrate separately the different privileges and benefits conferred upon believers, under the Covenant of Grace, and the delightful relations into which, by it, they are brought to Christ and the Father, we must at present confine ourselves to the design with which we set out, of contrasting it with the broken covenant, under which we all are by nature. For this purpose, we turn again to the contrast drawn by St Paul between the two covenants and their respective heads.[1] He points out two opposite causes, and traces to each its inseparable effects; to *Adam's disobedience*, *condemnation*, and *death;* to *Christ's obedience*, *righteousness*, or *justification*, and *life;* each train of consequences belonging to all who are *in Adam*, or *in Christ*. His argument goes to prove two points; first, that, through the superabounding grace manifested in the second covenant, those interested in it are '*much more*' than freed from

[1] Rom. v. 12–20.

the consequences of the first; secondly, that the good effects of the second are '*much more*' certainly conveyed to all in Christ, than the bad effects of the first are to all in Adam. 'Can any thing be "much more" certain than 'that all men, as one with Adam, die? Yes, it is '"much more" certain that all who, by faith, receive 'abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, 'shall reign in life with Christ. Enoch and Elijah did 'not die, but were translated; and multitudes innumer-'able shall be living when Christ shall come, but not 'one true believer shall come short of reigning in life 'with him.'[1] This certainty arises from the unchangeable perfection of their Representative, in whom are hid their safety and their life. They are not put to the inevitably fatal trial of their own personal obedience, for justification; the perfect obedience of their Surety forms their righteousness in the sight of God; and he keeps it for them, and secures their eternal right 'to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God.'

But we said, that an interest in the second covenant '*much more*' than frees us from the bad effects of our share in the first. How can this be? Because, by the righteousness of Christ, imputed to them, believers are not only freed from the guilt of Adam's transgression, and from the guilt of their own actual transgressions; but they are placed in a safer, happier, and more exalted condition than they could have been, had Adam never sinned. They are safer, because their safety does not depend upon their own strength and obedience: they are happier and more exalted, because, by their relation to Christ, their Everlasting Father, they are raised to more delightful and closer fellowship with God, than Adam, even in his state of innocence, could enjoy. They

[1] Scott.

are the beloved children, whom Jesus will present to the Father, as those given him by solemn and eternal covenant, whom he has redeemed by his blood, sanctified by his Spirit, and united to himself so entirely that he will even share his throne with them to all eternity.

The propriety wherewith this second covenant is termed *The Covenant of Grace*, will be still further evident, when we consider the epithets by which it is described in Scripture, namely, the 'Covenants of Promise,'[1] the 'Covenant of God's Peace,'[2] the 'Holy Covenant,'[3] and the 'Everlasting Covenant.'[4]

First, it is called *The Covenants of Promise.* This term perhaps strictly means the covenants made with Abraham, with Israel, with David, &c. of which the *promised Messiah* was the great subject. But it is surely not straining the term, to view it as denoting the rich store of promises contained in the Covenant of Grace. So rich, so free and full, so perfectly adapted to the believer's wants, are these promises, that, had he been employed to frame them for himself, he could have added nothing to the catalogue. The promises have been arranged and collected in various forms, for the use of Christians; and such collections are very valuable to refer to; but, for our own part, we prefer gathering the precious fruits, in the different parts of the garden, where they hang, to having them arranged in baskets ready to our hand; and even those who have little knowledge or experience in the study of the Bible, we would advise to a similar course. A single promise which you found for yourself, and which, brought home by the Spirit, was made effectual to strengthen, to encourage, or comfort you, will be looked back upon in future years, when expe-

[1] Eph. ii. 12; Rom. ix. 4, 8.
[2] Numb. xxv. 12.
[3] Luke i. 72; Dan. xi. 28, 30.
[4] Jer. xxxii. 40.

rience has proved its truth, with far more delight, with far deeper impression, than a whole class of promises collected by another. This promise, when turned up in your Bible, will not need the mark of pen or pencil to attract your eye. It is marked in your grateful experience. It has been fulfilled more abundantly than you could have asked or thought.

Without enlarging upon this endless and most blessed theme, of the *promises* contained in the covenant, it may be remarked, that they are all involved in the three remaining designations of the covenant; having reference to either *peace*, *holiness*, or *everlasting life*.

The covenant of which Christ is the Head, is eminently a covenant of God's *peace*.'[1] He is 'our peace;'[2] through whom, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, and are admitted to a state of favour, acceptance, and friendship with him,[3]—a state opposite to that wherein we all are by nature. This covenanted peace was typified, and, by the faithful enjoyed, in the peace-offerings of old. It was promised as one of the chief blessings of Messiah's reign, and it forms a principal characteristic of his followers.

But the covenant is no less eminently a *holy* covenant; preserving unsullied the holiness of God's government, and bestowing upon man personal holiness. This is what gives confidence to believers in laying hold of the covenant, that, while it procures for them all possible blessings, without the least merit of their own; its conditions have been perfectly performed by their Head, so that God is just in forgiving them, glorified in saving them. And they delight not more in those clauses of the charter which ensure their pardon and peace, than in those which ensure their sanctification. The promise, 'I will forgive

[1] Numb. xxv. 12. [2] Eph. ii. 14. [3] Rom. v. 1,2.

their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more, is endeared to them by its inseparable companion in the charter, 'I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;' and by this, 'they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.'[1] The believer rejoices to find that by the terms of the covenant, he is provided with a twofold righteousness, answering to the two-fold unrighteousness which he inherited from Adam: imputed righteousness, wrought for him by Christ, and inward and personal righteousness wrought in him by the Spirit of Christ.

We have still to view the covenant under one other character, without which all the foregoing would be worse than valueless. The blessings and privileges conveyed by it would but aggravate the misery of those who taste them, were it liable to change or to termination. But, blessed be God, the Covenant of Grace, the New, the Holy, the Peaceful covenant, is *immutable*, *everlasting*: not depending upon the faithfulness of frail, sinful man; but ensured by all the perfections of the eternal and unchangeable JEHOVAH. In the Old Testament, God promises, 'I will make an *everlasting* covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me.'[2] Thus the Lord engages for *our* part of the covenant as well as for his own; another proof that it is all *of grace*. And assurances to the same purpose are given in the New Testament. Christ undertakes to keep his sheep, so that no man shall be able to pluck them out of his hand.[3] Believers are called the 'preserved in Jesus Christ:'[4] they are 'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.'[5]

[1] Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. [2] Jer. xxxii. 40. [3] John x. 28.
[4] Jude 1. [5] 1 Pet. i. 5.

To the views above taken of the covenant of grace, it may be objected, That by representing it as performed so entirely by God, in Christ, we leave to man no free agency, no responsibility; as if he were not required personally to enter into covenant with God, and could not be blamed for refusing to do so. So much is this the reverse of our view, that we would urge every one to try his interest in the covenant made with Christ as the Head, by what he knows of personal covenanting with God. We say not, that no one can be in Christ, but we say, no one *can know that he is*, who is not conscious of a personal transaction, equivalent to a covenant, having taken place between God and himself. Whether we have done this in the express and solemn manner recommended by some excellent Divines,[1] or in the more ordinary exercises of devotion, there must have been a distinct and cordial acquiescence, on our part, in the plan of salvation by grace, a hearty renunciation of every thing that would mingle with free grace in our salvation; and, at the same time, a hearty dedication of ourselves, in soul and body, in every thing we are, and have, to the service of our Covenant-God. This transaction will not be performed once only. It will be renewed again and again; our treacherous departures from it deplored, and strength for the future earnestly supplicated. And while we rejoice to know that our everlasting interest in it is secure, out of reach of harm, we shall all the more be ashamed and confounded for our own vile ingratitude and unfaithfulness. Mark, God does not keep us from departing from him, by putting *presumption* and *carelessness* into our hearts, but by putting *his fear* there;[2] by infusing a godly fear of sin, a fear of grieving his Holy

[1] See Doddridge's Rise and Progress, and Guthrie's Christian's Great Interest.

[2] Jer. xxxii. 40.

Spirit, a fear lest, after all our professions, and duties, and privileges, we should ourselves be cast away.

Now, seeing that all men are either in Adam, or in Christ, might it not have been expected, that all would have lain low in the dust before their Maker, acknowledging their fallen, abject, condemned state, and eagerly looking out for deliverance from it; and that, a hope being held out of another and better covenant, into which they might enter, all would have pressed into it? And, yet, it is a lamentable fact, that most men are neither humbled for their share in the first Adam, nor anxious to gain a share in the Second; although urged and entreated to do so, by all the motives of fear and hope, of danger and deliverance, that the God of heaven can address to them. Some are denying the depravity of their natural state, saying, it is not nearly so bad as we represent: others are impiously accusing their Maker, for bringing them into this state, though He offers them another covenant which, as we have seen, would 'much more' than deliver them from the bad effects of the first. Most men are unwilling to trace their misery to its true cause, sin; and thus they virtually deny that 'by one man sin entered, and death by sin.' They walk through the world, proudly and *independently*, as they imagine, with little or no concern whether they are still in the bonds of the *broken* covenant, or brought into the bonds of the *everlasting* covenant. Others again make for themselves a complex covenant; trusting partly to their own obedience or innocence, and partly to the mercy of God. Indeed, teachers are not wanting to encourage men in this complex system. While they profess to preach that 'salvation is of free grace;' they make the first turning from sin to God, or repentance, to originate in the sinner himself; his perseverance in a right course they trace to

himself also, and his final victory is a mixture of his own merits and those of the Redeemer. In short, they tell their hearers, that if *they do their part*, *God* will not be wanting in *His*. Poor comfort this, to a wretched, weak, sinful soul, that knows *it can do no part* but *transgress* the covenant. But what solid comfort and peace does the believer find in the Covenant of Grace! The simple *word* of God would have been a sufficient warrant for our confidence; but he has been pleased to add to this, his solemn *oath;* to pledge all the perfections of his character and being, for the fulfilment of a covenant transaction; that by two immutable things, his promise and his oath, we might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.

The Christian, then, rests, according to the measure of his faith, upon this 'sure' and 'well ordered' covenant. He rejoices in its promises, with 'ever new delight;' and in this, especially, he rejoices, that it is an *everlasting* and *absolute* covenant. Did its permanence depend upon one single act of his own, he knows it might be broken the next hour; but this is his confidence, that the Last Adam has perfectly fulfilled its conditions, and in the name of his people taken possession of the true Paradise. He has already received some tokens of relationship to the Second Adam; and therefore can surely rely on receiving all the rest; even grace, mercy, and peace, until he comes to glory.

In conclusion, we would repeat what we formerly said, under the title Surety, that the covenant of grace, mercy, and peace, is freely offered to *all;* that no qualification is required for an interest in it, but *willingness*. We would affectionately urge all who are in doubt concerning their state, to examine whether any thing like a hearty covenant transaction has passed between them and

God: for, although it is made with Christ, as the Head, it must be ratified with each individual, as his member. And oh! in how fatal an error will you be found at last, if you are seeking to enter Paradise, by that way which is still guarded by the flaming sword; which, if in any measure you are trusting to your own repentance, faith, or obedience, you are actually doing! oh! remember, this is making 'a covenant with death, an agreement with hell:'[1] and a day is coming, when, as far as safety is concerned, this covenant must be disannulled, this agreement shall not stand; but *they shall stand*, as the only covenant in which you have any interest. How bitter then will be the reflection, that you were repeatedly warned to flee from that covenant, and accept of a better, an everlasting covenant, and *ye would not!*

To our fellow-members, interested in the Covenant of Life, we would say, The Lord will ever be mindful of his covenant: Oh! be ye also mindful of it always. Stand by the pillar, on which the blood of the covenant was shed: renew your covenant with God, over this blessed sacrifice; and then, in the strength of your Head, make a covenant before the Lord, to walk after him, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all your heart, and with all your soul.[2]

We cannot conclude better than in the words of a pious author, 'Oh! Adam! what hast thou done? Oh! Jesus! what hast thou not done?'

[1] Isaiah xxviii. 15. [2] Ps. cxi. 5; 2 Kings xxiii. 3; Ps. l. 5.

ESSAY XXVI.

THE LIFE—QUICKENING SPIRIT—BREAD OF LIFE—TREE OF LIFE—THE TRUE VINE—PRINCE OF LIFE—OUR LIFE, OR LIFE ETERNAL.

HAVING viewed the Lord Jesus Christ as the Last Adam, or Head of the Covenant of Grace, we now proceed to study separately the blessings which, by virtue of that covenant, he conveys and secures to his people.

And first, let us study him as THE LIFE. 'God 'only is The Life, properly so called, and no other be-'ing hath a life of its own, independent or underived. 'He is the first Cause of existence; therefore, in Him 'all things, whether spiritual or material, have their be-'ing. That the *Father hath life in himself*, nobody will 'deny. Of *Christ* it was said, that *in Him was Life*, 'and the Life was the Light of men; and he says ex-'pressly, *I am the Life*. That the *Spirit* is also Life, 'appears, both from the attribute being applied to Him, '*The Spirit of Life*, and from the exercise of the attri-'bute by him.'[1]

The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have each Life in themselves; but, in a peculiar sense, '*the Father hath given to the Son to have life in himself;*'[2] as the Head of the Covenant, to bestow and convey life to his spiritual offspring. This is the subject at present before us; and it naturally divides itself into two parts,—

[1] Serle. [2] John v. 26.

1st, What is the life that Christ bestows on his people?
2d, How does he so bestow it, as to be called their Life?

First, What is the Life that Christ bestows on his people? and, first of all, What is Life, in the general meaning of the term?

There are various kinds of life bestowed on creatures by the Creator. There is the life of *angels*, an immortal and purely spiritual existence; there is the life of *man*, either by the union of soul and body, or by the separate existence of the soul; there is the life of *animals*, a bodily existence without soul; and, lower still, there is the life of *vegetation*. Nothing is more certain, than that even the lowest of these kinds of life, it is beyond the power of a creature to bestow. Man could no more give its short span of life to an ephemera, or even to a blade of grass, than he could give immortality to an angel.

But still we have not answered the question, What is Life? The truth is, man can no more explain what is life, than he can bestow it. He tells us, 'Life is motion,' or, 'a power to move, and do the actions of life;' but this tells us little more than that life is the power to live; in short, that life is life. Since this, however, is the only definition we can find, we must rest satisfied with saying, that '*Life is motion*, whether in the animal 'or intellectual world;'[1] while we confess our utter inability to comprehend the nature of that vital principle which produces motion, either in the material body, or in the immaterial mind. 'Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward?'

When we witness the change that takes place in a human body, when suddenly deprived of life, how totally

[1] Serle.

unable are we to express or understand what it has lost! How feeble then seems the definition, 'Life is motion!' It is true, that body which so lately was all motion, activity, and animation, is now motionless, both as to outward aetion, and the wonderful machinery which moved within. But we feel that life was a great deal more than motion; though that may be the philosophical definition. In the case of a well organized body, there was *the exercise of all the senses;* by which information and evidence were communicated to the mind, while eaeh served as an inlet of pleasure or of pain, according to the different objects presented to it. Now, the body neither sees nor hears, can neither smell, feel, nor taste.

But, in answer to the question, What is the Life that Christ bestows on his people? we reply, It is 'a spiri-
'tural, supernatural, and heavenly life, whereby we live
'to God, and enjoy peace with him, which is also the
'way to, and the beginning of, eternal life.'[1]—'If we
'would share in a happier being after this life, the life
'that ends not, it must begin here; graee and glory
'is one and the same life, only with this difference, that
'the one is the beginning, and the other the perfection
'of it; or, if we do call them two several lives, yet the
'one is the undoubted pledge of the other.'[2]

Now, this spiritual or eternal life bears analogy to natural life, in both the definitions given of the latter. It has *motion*, and the *exercise of the senses.*

As long as a man remains in his natural state, dead in trespasses and sins, he has neither spiritual motion, nor spiritual senses. But when spiritual life is infused into him, spiritual motion is felt within, all the powers of the mind, and the affections of the heart, being moved towards God; and spiritual motion appears in the life,

[1] Cruden. [2] Leighton.

it being now devoted to the service of God. Now also the spiritual senses are awakened from their dormant state, and exercised to discern good and evil. The *eye* is opened to see the beauty of holiness, the hideousness of sin, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, the worthlessness of the world, and the reality of eternal things; it is especially opened to see the vileness and helplessness of the man's own state, and the perfect suitableness of the Saviour to his necessities. The *ear* is opened to hear the glad sound of the Gospel; a *savour* of life is diffused over the soul; spiritual *feelings*, and a spiritual *taste*, are produced in it.

If it be not too fanciful, we would remark, that the analogy between the bodily and spiritual senses is closest in those senses, the exercise of which can be least expressed in words; such as *feeling* and *taste;* and that these, therefore, form the truest criteria of spiritual life. We can describe, though often but faintly, what we see or hear; but what we feel or taste, no words can express. In like manner, we can describe, in some degree, the light and knowledge that have been imparted to our minds, since we began to live unto God; but to describe the new emotions and the new taste that have been implanted there, is impossible. We now love what we formerly hated or regarded with indifference; we now hate many things in which we formerly delighted; we now fear many things in which before we could see no danger; and hope for those things which till now presented to us no attractions. Our feelings of gratitude, of shame, of reverence, and of love, towards our redeeming God, of sorrow for sin, and joy in the Holy Ghost, of brotherly affection for the saints, and yearning compassion for the unconverted, words can but faintly describe. Nor can we describe any better the new taste

we have acquired. There is a relish of divine things, a sort of instinctive desire for the food that is nourishing to the soul, and a sort of instinctive aversion to what is hurtful to it; while sometimes we cannot assign any positive reason for choosing the one and refusing the other; at least the taste decides, before the judgment has time to deliberate; and it decides, for reasons quite inexplicable to those who have not this spiritual discernment.

In short, when the soul is made spiritually alive, 'all things are become new,' because the soul itself has become 'a new creature.' It has begun a new existence; a new world has opened to its view; it can tell the instrument whereby it was called into this new existence, 'the incorruptible word of God;' and perhaps the particular part of that word, and the particular occasion, which were made effectual to its new birth; but the new life itself it can no more explain, than we can explain natural life.

We have hitherto viewed spiritual life only in its analogy to the life of the body. But, to give a more enlarged and Scriptural view of it, we shall take two descriptions of life eternal, spoken by Jesus himself. The first of these is, 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.'[1] The other,—'This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.'[2] In the first of these texts, eternal life being contrasted with a state of *condemnation*, it must there mean a *title to everlasting bliss*, by the imputation of Christ's righteousness, instead of that title to everlasting misery, to which we are all born,

[1] John v. 24. [2] John xvii. 3.

And this title is represented as sure, from the time that a man believes; from that moment, *he is passed from death unto life:* it is as sure in God's sight, though perhaps not in the man's own apprehension, as it will be when the veil of mortality shall be dropped. 'This 'new life puts us out of the danger and fear of that 'eternal death: we are passed from death unto life, 'says St John,[2] speaking of those that are born again; 'and being passed, there is no repassing, no going back 'from this life to death again.'[3]

As our first text shows *how to obtain a title to life eternal*, our second teaches *in what that life consists.* It tells us, This is life eternal, *to know God, and Jesus Christ* whom he has sent. This knowledge is the beginning, foretaste, and pledge of life everlasting. And the knowledge of God and of Christ, here intended, must be inward, personal, and experimental. We may entertain a high esteem and regard for an individual, from knowing his character, from hearing his public speeches, and seeing his public doings; but how is our esteem enhanced by affection and gratitude, when we become personally acquainted with him; when he honours us with his friendship, enters into all our concerns, assists us in every difficulty, gives us his valuable counsel, and equally valuable reproofs! Now, the knowledge of God which constitutes eternal life, is of this intimate and personal nature. The happiness of Heaven will consist in the perfection of this knowledge and communion; and the more we taste of them here on earth, the surer pledge have we of eternally enjoying them in heaven. We become partakers of eternal life, in the two senses above described, at one and the same time. The Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus frees us at the same time from the death

[1] 1 John iii. 14. [2] Leighton.

of *condemnation*,[1] and from the death of *unregeneracy*; only the former transition is complete at once, the other is gradual.

We come now to the second part of our subject, How does Christ so bestow life on his people, as to be styled their Life? This question we shall answer, by proving that to him belong the following titles:—'A Quickening Spirit;' 'The Bread of Life;' 'The Tree of Life;' 'The True Vine,' 'The Prince of Life,' and 'Our Life,' or 'Eternal Life.'

A QUICKENING SPIRIT.

First, he is 'A Quickening Spirit,'[2] This title denotes both his power to quicken the body, which, by the context, seems chiefly intended, and his power and office to quicken the soul, dead in trespasses and sins. He who can effect the one, must be able also to effect the other. His power to raise the body will form the subject of a future Essay. It is the resurrection of the soul that at present engages us; and, in reference to it, 'The last Adam was made a quickening Spirit.' 'Christ, the 'second Adam, or public person, and Head of the New 'Covenant, is partaker of the divine nature, and endued 'with the Holy Spirit, whereby he becomes the fountain 'of heavenly life to all his members;[3] and, as the soul 'dwelling in the first Adam's body made him a living 'soul; so Christ, dwelling in true believers, quickens and 'enables them both here and hereafter.'[4]

[1] Rom. viii. 1, 2.
[2] 1 Cor. xv. 45.
[3] Rom. viii. 10, 11.
[4] Cruden.

But it may be objected, Since regeneration is peculiarly the work of the Holy Ghost; since they who are born again are born of the Spirit, why do we ascribe to the Son the work of quickening the soul? We reply, The title being plainly given to the Son, would be sufficient warrant for our doing so; but we have a larger warrant in the general tenor of Scripture. The Holy Spirit is 'the Spirit of Christ;'[1] all his influences on the believer's soul, from first to last, flow from and through Christ, being procured by his death, and bestowed through his intercession. Believers are 'quickened together with Christ;'[2] they are begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,[3] in virtue of his resurrection, and of all the benefits thereby procured and sealed. The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, are shed on them abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour;[4] and, with regard to both body and soul, 'as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.'[5]

BREAD OF LIFE.

That the Lord Jesus merits the title of Our Life, is further evident from his styling himself The Bread of Life. Not only does he impart the new and spiritual life, but he becomes its support and sustenance, being both the Author and the Matter of life eternal. In the 6th chapter of John's Gospel, is recorded the appropriation of this affecting title by the Lord Jesus himself. He said, 'I am the Bread of Life;'—'the Bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life to

[1] 1 Pet. i. 11. [2] Eph. ii. 5. [3] 1 Pet. i. 3.
[4] Tit. iii. 5, 6. [5] John v. 21.

the world.' He declared that this Bread from heaven was a nourishing and satisfying food, infinitely superior to the manna of the wilderness, in that it preserved, not natural life merely, but eternal life; and he further declared it to be the only and indispensable food of the soul, without which it could have no life in it. Nor did our blessed Master utter this doctrine in a dark parable, leaving it to our own interpretation. He declared, in plain terms, the manner in which he was to become the food of our souls, and the manner in which we must partake of that food, so as to have life in him.

By the expressions, 'the bread that I will give is my *flesh*, which I will give for the life of the world,' 'My *flesh* is meat indeed, and my *blood* is drink indeed,' he implied, that it was by the separation of his human flesh and blood in death, that he was to give life to the world. And, by the familiar and expressive figure of *eating* and *drinking*, he taught the most unlettered, in what manner they are invited to partake of this life. We all know that the most excellent and wholesome food, though prepared, and set before us, will not nourish our bodies unless we *eat* it; so this most excellent and divine Bread, prepared by God himself, and set before us in his word and ordinances, will not nourish our souls, unless received and applied by faith, and digested by holy meditation. To 'eat the flesh of the Son of Man,' then, and 'to drink his blood,' is, plainly, to receive, with adoring gratitude, the benefits purchased by his death, and to apply them to our own perishing souls, as their only support and sustenance; and the more simply and constantly we so 'feed upon Christ in our hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving,' the stronger we grow in the divine life; the clearer are our evidences of having 'passed from death unto life,' by justification; and the

richer is our enjoyment of that 'life eternal,' which consists in the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ.

This Bread is equally necessary to the believer in every period of his heavenly life. As soon as he is born again, he hungers after it with an appetite that nothing else will satisfy, and which destroys his relish for worldly pleasures. And so satisfying a portion does he find it, that the more he receives, the more he desires; he finds it both necessary and delightful to gather this manna daily, ere the sun of earthly avocations has melted it; and it is his own fault if his vessel be not filled. By eating of this Bread, the 'little children' in Christ know that their sins are forgiven them, for his name's sake. By eating of this Bread, the 'young men' in Christ become strong to overcome the wicked one; and, as they grow up to be 'fathers' in Christ, their experience of the necessity and satisfaction of feeding upon this Bread, is ever increasing;'[1] they receive it more simply, more gratefully, more unreservedly by far, than they did when 'babes;' and devoutly acknowledge that all they know, or have known of the Father, has been through the broken body and shed blood of the Son of Man, and by the life therein communicated to them.

TREE OF LIFE.

To make it more evident that all kinds of life are treasured up in Christ, he is compared even to those things which have *vegetable* life, and is called THE TREE OF LIFE.

Both good and wicked men are, in Scripture, compared to trees. 'The godly' (says the Psalmist) 'shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bring-

[1] 1 John ii. 12–14.

eth forth his fruit in his season.' The wicked are called barren and unfruitful trees, trees whose fruit withereth, or is sour and bad. The aptness of this comparison is obvious, as no object in nature is more beautiful and valuable than a fine tree, and few are more worthless and unsightly than a withered or barren one. The life of a tree is longer than that of animals, or of human beings. When God was to promise long life and prosperity to his people, he said, 'As the days of a *tree* are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands.'

In the garden of Eden were two trees of very solemn significance,—the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The former was 'a natural 'means of prolonging man's life, and also a sacramental 'pledge of his continuance in that life, on condition of 'his perfect obedience. But this *Tree of Life* was to him 'a *Tree of Death*, because of his infidelity and disobe-'dience. *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil* 'was so called, because, by the eating of it, man came 'to know experimentally the vast difference between 'good and evil; the greatness of that good he formerly 'enjoyed, by the loss of it; and the greatness of that 'evil he had brought upon himself, by the feeling of it; 'and this was another sacramental pledge which sealed 'death spiritual, temporal, and eternal, in case of dis-'obedience.'[1]

How can we sufficiently adore the mercy and goodness of God, in that, after we had forfeited all right to the first tree of life, Almighty Wisdom and Love did provide for us a Second, far better than the first, being not a sacramental pledge of life merely, but a real, unfading, eternal Fountain of Life.

[1] Cruden.

After this first mention of the tree of life, in paradise, we find the term only in the book of Proverbs, and in that of Revelation. 'As used in Proverbs, it sometimes 'denotes rather the *fruits* of the tree than the tree itself; 'the graces, good example, pious discourse, wise in-'structions, fervent prayers, and zealous good works of 'the righteous, which become exceedingly beneficial to 'those around them, and promote the salvation of sinful 'men. But, in the 3d chapter, 18th verse, it seems to 'denote Christ himself:—"She (Wisdom) is a tree of 'life to them that lay hold upon her; and happy is every 'one that retaineth her." If we understand it of Christ, 'the Wisdom of God (as Origen, St Ambrose, St Au-'gustine, and others do), or of his doctrine, which is the 'same, it is literally true that he gives immortality, as 'the tree of life in paradise would have done. A tree of 'life, then, seems to be a proverbial expression for that 'which prolongs life, and makes it very delightful and 'pleasant, as well as firm and durable.'[1]

When our blessed Lord is compared to a tree, it is always to a fruit-tree, 'a tree for meat,' a vine, an apple-tree. Many trees are valuable to men, for their shade alone, without bearing fruit; but our Tree of Life combines both these valuable properties, shade and fruit.

In the 47th chapter of Ezekiel, a vision is described, exactly similar to that of St John, in the 22d of Revelation: and, though the trees in the former vision are called 'trees for meat,' while those in the latter are 'the tree of life,' it is manifestly the same Tree that was seen by the prophet of the Old Testament, and by the prophet and apostle of the New. And it is of little consequence whether we understand it of Christ himself, or of the blessings which he conveys. In either sense, it repre-

[1] Scott.

sents the several parts of his mediatorial work; the sufficiency of his salvation to supply all the various wants of believers, and to complete their everlasting felicity; the plenteous provisions of the Gospel, the precious promises of the Sacred Word, and the privileges of believers, communicated to their souls by him.[1]

Let us, then, depending on the help of his life-giving Spirit, for light and for efficacy to our humble endeavours, dwell for a little upon this delightful emblem of our Redeemer, as presented in the two visions, viewed as one and the same;[2] connected also with the blessed experience of the church, 'I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.'

The trees seen by Ezekiel and by St. John, grew in luxuriant abundance; very many trees, on the one side of the river and on the other: they were trees for meat, or many trees of one excellent species, the Tree of Life. They yielded a constant and never failing supply of fruit, varying with each varying season, twelve manner of fruits, new according to his months. The leaf of this Tree was no less valuable than its fruit; for as the one supported life, and rendered it pleasant, the other healed the diseases which would have destroyed all relish for the fruit: the leaf was for medicine, for the healing of the nations. To complete the perfection of this Tree, the prophet saw that it was imperishable, a tree whose leaf shall not fade, neither shall its fruit be consumed: and all this, because the river on whose banks it grew was the River of Life, the waters that issued out of the sanctuary, and healed and vivified every thing where they came.

[1] Scott on Ezek. xlvii.

[2] Ezek. xlvii. 1–12, and Rev. xxii. 1, 2, taken in connexion with Cant. ii. 3.

This is the Tree, excelling all 'the trees of the wood,' under whose shadow the believer sits down, and finds shelter from the scorching rays of Divine Justice, from the accusations of Satan and his own conscience, and from all the trials and troubles of life. He betakes himself to this shelter on first setting out on his journey heaven-ward, and never quits it, knowing that there alone he is safe and happy. In this view, the 'very many trees' suit the idea of a journey, as in every stage of his progress, the believer travels under the shade of the Tree of Life, finding it ever above his head. The path of the flock is along the banks of the River of living water, that pure 'River of water of Life, clear as crystal,' which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb; and on each side of which grows the Tree of Life. That is, by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we enjoy all the blessings of life and salvation, procured by the mediation of Christ, of which shade and fruit are lively emblems. Every one who truly reposes under the shadow of this Tree, gathers of its fruit; but it is gathered in various degrees of abundance, by different pilgrims, according to the sovereign pleasure of the Proprietor of the garden, and according to their own diligence. Under this image of *fruit*, the higher enjoyments of believers seem principally intended. As, for our bodies, God gives us not only bread for the necessary support of life, but a great variety of pleasant fruits, which are 'sweet to the taste,' and refreshing to the frame, especially in eastern climates; so, for our souls, he graciously provides not merely Bread to sustain our spiritual existence, but a rich and inexhaustible variety of Fruits, to render that existence delightful. We have already said, that the Bread of Life is as necessary to the advanced Christian as to the babe in Christ; and that the former feeds upon it with greater

simplicity and gratitude than the latter, because with more experimental knowledge of its virtues. We do not therefore mean to imply, that the Bread is food for the young in grace, and the Fruit for the more advanced: but although both partake of both, the Fruit is most enjoyed by the experienced Christian, because it represents the higher attainments, sweeter comforts, and more choice privileges which he enjoys, by closer union and fellowship with Christ. These fruits are too numerous to be named; they are ever 'new,' according to the varying circumstances and necessities of every pilgrim, and ever 'new,' in the delight unmixed with satiety which they impart. The most precious of them are, peace of conscience, a sense of God's love, the witness of the Spirit that we are children of God, the knowledge that our sins are forgiven us for Christ's sake, joy in the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, fellowship with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, the consolation that is in Christ, the comfort of love, and the assurance that we shall be enabled to persevere to the end. But what gives to these fruits their highest zest is, that sweet as they are, they are but as the grapes of Eshcol, pledges and samples of the far-famed fruit of the Land of Promise, which the redeemed shall soon gather, fresh from the Tree, in the immediate presence of their reconciled God, in the true Paradise, which the Last Adam secures to them. For, through his death, and his living again, they have a right to the Tree of Life, and shall enter in through the gates into the city.

But the *leaves* of the Tree must not be passed over unnoticed; they were 'for medicine,' or, 'for the healing of the nations;' and are supposed to denote the less attractive and pleasing gifts of Providence and of Grace, which are, nevertheless, very profitable and necessary.

Affliction and humiliation are needful, to bring the soul into a healthy state, to give it an appetite and relish for the high privileges and joys of fellowship with Christ; to cure it of its palsied inaction, and restore the right exercise of the spiritual senses, besides other healing operations, too numerous to mention. Perhaps the leaves may also denote the humbler parts of the Saviour's work, without which the more exalted had been of no avail. For, without leaves, there is no shade afforded by a tree; and without the abasement and death of the Saviour, we could have had no shelter from the wrath of God. As to the future benefits and enjoyments resulting from the Tree of Life, the leaves will be for the healing of both body and soul, of all diseases, infirmities, decays, and dissolution; for there shall be 'no more curse' there. Then, truly, we shall experience that the leaf of this Tree does not fade, neither is its fruit consumed, to all eternity: for, as the days of the Tree of Life itself, shall be the days of every one of God's people; and they shall long, yea, for ever, enjoy the work of their hands.

The people of Christ are, in an inferior sense, called 'trees of life;' but that all their life, vigour, and fruitfulness are derived from him, is still further proved, by another title which he adopted,—

THE TRUE VINE.

'I am the vine (said Jesus), ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.'[1] The deity of our Lord has been compared

[1] John xv. 1–6.

to the *root* of the Vine; his humanity to the *stem;* and believers are the *branches*, which draw all their sap from the *root*, through the *stem*. In proportion as they abide closely in him, they bear much fruit. That this fruit is not the natural produce of their hearts is evident, both from their name of branches, and from the means required to increase their fruitfulness, which resemble the sharp pruning-knife.

PRINCE OF LIFE.

But, that Christ is the Life of his people, is still further proved, from his being styled the PRINCE OF LIFE. As God, he is the author and giver of temporal life; 'in whom we live, and move, and have our being;' in whose hand is our breath: and as Mediator, he is invested with sovereign authority to *give eternal life* to as many as the Father has given him.[1] He gives to his sheep eternal life,[2] and ensures them against the possibility of forfeiting it. It is true, the 'Prince of Life'[3] himself came under the power of death, for a season; he was 'killed,' but he had power to lay down his life, and power to take it again; and, 'to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be *Lord both of the dead, and living.*'[4]

OUR LIFE, OR LIFE ETERNAL.

The various titles under which we have now traced the Lord Jesus Christ abundantly testify that all the life

[1] John xvii. 2. [2] John x. 28. [3] Acts iii. 15.
[4] Rom. xiv. 9.

his people enjoy, from its commencement in the new birth, to its consummation in eternal glory, they owe to him, and enjoy through him. He is therefore justly styled, THEIR LIFE.[1] Not only is he the Author of Life, as a Quickening Spirit, the Support of Life as the Bread, the Protector and Enjoyment of Life as the Tree, the Fountain of it as the Vine, and the Sovereign Disposer of it as the Prince of Life: he is the very LIFE itself to his people; being to every one of them, what the soul is to the body,—the vital principle, the spring of all spiritual motion and sensation. Thus St. Paul, after declaring that he lived unto God, earnestly disclaims all power of life in himself; 'I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.'[2] Thus St. John, to the same purpose, 'This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.'[3] Thus Jesus himself spake, 'I am the Life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die.'[4] St. John concludes his first Epistle by this definition of eternal life; 'We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.' To have Christ as 'our Life,' then, is to be united to him by a mutual indwelling, as intimate as that which unites the branches to the vine, the body to the soul: it is to abide in Him, and He in us. Were this union perfect and uninterrupted, the life of faith on earth would almost resemble the life

[1] Col. iii. 3, 4. [2] Gal. ii. 20. [3] 1 John v. 11, 12.
[4] John xi. 25, 26.

of heaven. But, alas! the Christian has to learn that Christ is his Life, not only by a happy enjoyment of communion with him, but by the occasional loss of that communion. His life of justification cannot be interrupted: but this is hidden in the secret counsels of God, and can only be discerned by the life of sanctification. And, when provoked by the unbelief or slothfulness of his servants, Jesus withdraws his vivifying presence, they feel as dead as ever, and learn by painful experience, that their life is in him alone. In this state, the Christian often fears that he has never been quickened by the Spirit of Christ, but is still dead in sin: but on searching deeper, he finds some symptoms of life, even in his complaints and fears. The dead cannot grieve: to them it is no ground of lamentation, that they cleave to the dust, that they cannot move nor feel. But the Christian, even by complaining of insensibility, proves that he is not quite insensible. He is restless and uneasy, and would give much to be in bitterness, rather than remain in this *painful deadness*.

Were it possible for Christ to die, his people would die also: but because he lives, they live also; because he ever liveth, and is made their High Priest 'after the power of an endless life,' they also shall inherit everlasting life. 'That eternal life,' which was once the object of bodily perception to his people, shall once more be seen and heard on the earth: and, when Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Then shall our true life begin, a life worthy of the name. God has not seen fit clearly to reveal to us in what this blessed life eternal shall consist. Were it such as we could comprehend with our present limited faculties, it would not be 'an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' This much, however, we know, and this is suf-

[1] John xiv. 19.

ficient, that it will mainly consist in the perfect enjoyment of that life of communion with, and conformity to, our adorable Saviour, which he has begun in us here below. Then will he show us our names indelibly written in the Book of Life, give us to eat of the Tree of Life, satisfy our thirst from the Fountain of the Water of Life, and place upon our head the Crown of Life. Then shall we know, after a different manner from what we now know it, that 'we have eternal life, and that this life is in God's Son.'

This Essay has been of so practical a nature throughout, that little remains to be said by way of application. But, oh! that the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus would be pleased to make use of this feeble instrument, to awaken some immortal souls from their death-like sleep! Let me at least entreat you, my fellow-sinners, to inquire seriously whether you are aware of any change having been wrought in you comparable to a new birth? Such a change cannot have been effected without your having some consciousness of it: and if you die without being born again, better, far better, had it been for you, that you had never been born. For, consider what is the alternative. If you do not receive *life* from *Christ*, you remain in *death*. You know you must submit to temporal death; but you are also in a state of *spiritual death;* which is, 'a separation of soul and body 'from God's favour;'[1] and you are exposed every moment to *eternal death*, which is 'the perpetual separation of the 'whole man from God's heavenly presence and glory, to 'be tormented for ever, with the devil and his angels.'[2] Oh! remember, if you refuse eternal life from Christ, the alternative *is not annihilation:* abhorrent as this is to

[1] Cruden. [2] Cruden.

human nature, it would gladly and eagerly be accepted instead of *everlasting destruction*, never-ending misery of soul and body, aggravated by bitter self-accusation in the case of those, who, during a season of grace, heard the voice of Christ in his word, complaining, 'Ye *will not come unto me, that ye might have life.*' Oh! that you might now hear that voice, ere it be too late, saying, 'Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life.'

One sure sign of spiritual life having been begun in us is, a hungering after the *Bread of Life:* for, if we have no desire for this Bread, it is too evident that we have not the life, to sustain which it was provided. How lamentable is it to see multitudes feeding on empty husks, and 'spending money for that which is not bread;' while the Bread of Life, though offered to all, freely, without money and without price, stands despised, neglected, unsought! And it is lamentable too, to see those who are eating of it, taking it so sparingly. Men do not starve their bodies as they do their souls: yet the consequences are equally injurious to the latter as to the former. 'The idle soul shall suffer hunger, but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.' A large proportion of Christians, it is feared, take of the Bread of God, just enough to sustain their spiritual life, but not enough to make it healthy, vigorous, and active. There is life enough in them to render loathsome the 'body of death' to which they are chained; but not enough to make existence pleasant and joyful. Christians of this sort thwart the design of their blessed Master, who came, not only that they might have life, but that they might have it 'more abundantly;' who says, 'Eat, O friends; drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.' But may He give to every one of us a spiritual appetite for this spiritual food; not only laying

before us 'the meat which endureth unto everlasting life;'. but taking the yoke off our jaws,[1] that we may eat, and be satisfied, yet hunger for more and more; saying, with better understanding than the Jews of old, 'Lord, evermore give us this Bread.'

Let us next inquire, what do we know of Jesus as the *Tree of Life?* Are we sitting down under his shadow with great delight, and finding his fruit sweet to our taste? Or do we know any thing at all of these holy *fruits*, the consolations and joys of religion? Do we experience, or expect, any more from Christ, than bare sustenance, freedom from eternal death? Alas! we all come sadly short in this respect; too indolent and supine to put forth our hand and gather the delicious fruits which hang in richest abundance and variety over our heads, we drag on our grovelling way, weary, parched, and weak; just alive and no more. We seldom enjoy even the *shadow* of the Tree, with any thing like *delight*, because we do not walk close beside the River on which it grows. Lord, fulfil thy gracious promises to thine own Israel! Bring them back to thee with weeping, and with supplications do thou lead them: cause them to walk by the rivers of water in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble. Then shall they know that Thou art their Father, their Shepherd, their Redeemer. Therefore shall they come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow together to the goodness of the Lord, for wheat, and for wine, and for oil; they shall rejoice from their sorrow, and be satisfied with thy goodness; even with the fruits of thy Spirit, which are Love, Joy, and Peace.[2]

We ought to be roused from our low and lethargic state, by the consideration, that it not only keeps our

[1] Hosea xi. 4.

[2] See Jer. xxxi. 9–14.

own souls meagre and comfortless; but is unprofitable to our brethren, and dishonourable to our God. Herein is the Father glorified, that we bear *much* fruit, that we are *filled* with the fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God. Oh! then, let us beseech Him who is *our Life* to 'quicken' us again, 'according to his word,' 'according to his loving kindness,' and, 'for his Name's sake;' that we may be not alive merely, but lively. Let us thankfully receive Life from him, as his free, sovereign gift, acknowledging that Death was our merited wages. And, as the best means of manifesting in our body the Life of the Lord Jesus, let us ever bear about a lively and affectionate remembrance of his Death.[1] Then shall we be constrained, by his exceeding great love, to live not to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again. And, 'walking in newness of life,' we shall possess increasing evidences that we have passed from death unto life; and that, the narrow stream of Jordan past, we shall live and reign with Christ, in glory everlasting.

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

ESSAY XXVII.

THE LIGHT.

After having viewed the Lord Jesus Christ as '*The Life*,' we naturally turn to view him as that which forms one of the greatest blessings of life, viz. as The Light. In this order, we follow the connexion pointed out in Scripture. The Psalmist says, 'With thee is the fountain of *life:* in thy *light* shall we see light.'[1] St John, when declaring that the Word was *Life*, adds the declaration, that he was *Light* also. 'In him was life; and the life was the light of men.'[2] Jesus himself, when announcing his character, as 'the Light of the World,' styles this light 'the Light of Life.'[3]

Nothing is more familiar to us than natural light; yet nothing is more inexplicable. If we were at a loss how to define *life*, we must confess ourselves equally at a loss when attempting to say, What is *light?* Its extreme velocity, moving, as is computed, at the rate of ten or eleven millions of miles in a minute of time; the inconceivable minuteness of its particles, which, notwithstanding their velocity, makes them fall upon the tender eye-ball with a sensation, not of pain but of pleasure; the various colours of which it is composed, so blended as to produce one pure, colourless medium; its innumerable changes and varieties, and the adaptation of our

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 9. [2] John i. 4. [3] John viii. 12.

visual organs to every change:—These, and many more considerations, render light one of the most astonishing wonders of creation. How, then, should our wonder and holy admiration rise, when we turn from the substance itself to him who formed it; when we read that sublime sentence, 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.'

As far as we can judge, no object in nature is a fitter emblem of its Maker, than this of light. It represents his infinite knowledge, wisdom, penetration, and truth; his perfect purity, holiness, excellency, joy, and glory. The Scriptures accordingly tell us, that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all;'[1] that he is the Father of Lights;[2] the only Author and Source of all light, whether natural, intellectual, moral, or spiritual to his creatures; that he 'dwells in the light which no man can approach unto,'[3] being surrounded with such terrible majesty and resplendent glory, that no man can approach unto him but in and by his incarnate Son.

Not only is the Godhead, generally, represented in Scripture under this emblem; it is peculiarly applied to Immanuel, God our Saviour; and this in various forms and modifications. He is styled 'The True Light;' 'The Light of Men;' 'Light of the World;' 'a Light to lighten the Gentiles;' 'the Day-spring from on high;' 'the Morning Star;' 'a Star out of Jacob;' 'the Sun of Righteousness.'

But before proceeding to the direct contemplation of Jesus under these titles, we must consider first, *what is meant by spiritual light, as opposed to spiritual darkness*, and first of all, advert to the *darkness* of man's natural state.

Of this we have ample and affecting testimonies in the

[1] 1 John i. 5. [2] James i. 17. [3] 1 Tim. vi. 16.

word of God, confirmed by history, observation, and experience. From the time when Adam sinned, he was 'driven from light into darkness,'[1] into the darkness of *ignorance*, *error*, and *uncertainty*, respecting the character of God, and his own position relative to God; he fell into the darkness of *separation from God*, 'having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that was in him, because of the blindness of his heart;'[2] and into *sin* and *impurity*, which are the 'works of darkness,' becoming, at the same time, liable to *eternal misery*, which is awfully termed 'outer darkness,' 'the blackness of darkness for ever.'

And what rendered man's condition most desperate was his *love of darkness*. 'Their foolish *heart* was darkened, so that they did not like to retain God in their knowledge.' They 'loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.' And from generation to generation, except where the light of God's Spirit has shone, men have '*walked on still* in darkness,' have contentedly '*sat* in darkness, and in the shadow of death.' The light they have possessed in other matters, the lights of reason, of conscience, of philosophy, and of science, have only served to show more plainly their utter blindness and darkness in spiritual things. And so completely unable were they to recover the light which they had lost, that their darkness is, in Scripture, compared to that of a dungeon.[3]

In opposition to this his dreadful state by nature, man's state, when redeemed and saved, is called *light*, by which we understand *true saving knowledge*, *holiness*, and *joy*.

The propriety of this figure must be obvious, when

[1] Job xviii. 18. [2] Eph. iv. 18. [3] Is. xlii. 7.

we reflect for a moment how essential *light* is to our correct *information* on different subjects, to our *security*, *prosperity*, and *comfort*. How little idea can we form of objects without *seeing* them? All that can be told us of their form and substance, of their beauty or deformity, all the information we can obtain of them through the other senses, fails to convey to our minds their real character. But let them become objects of *sight*, and instantaneous knowledge flashes upon us. Then as to *security*, we all know how dangerous it is to walk in the dark. Even where our path leads beside no precipices nor pit-falls, no swollen rivers nor deceitful swamps, we are apt to stumble and fall, over a stone, the stump of a tree, or other impediment, which in day-light we would pass without observing. And if it be difficult to *walk* safely in the dark, it is impossible, in most cases, to *work* in the dark. 'In the night (says our Lord) no man can work.' All the works of art and science, of business, and domestic occupations, must stand still at the approach of night, did not He, who formed the sun in the firmament, supply us also with artificial lights, to compensate in some measure for his absence. Then as to *comfort*, although this does not exactly depend upon the degree of light we enjoy, do we not all experience the cheering and exhilarating effect of bright sunshine on our animal frame and mental feelings, imparting a joy and elasticity that we cannot account for nor express? And what would be the state of men absolutely without light, we may form some idea of, from the description of the Egyptians during those awful days, wherein 'they saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days.'

Those who are in spiritual darkness, then, can *know* nothing aright of God or of themselves; they cannot

walk in the way of God's commandments, or in the way of peace; they cannot *work the works* of God; and they are shut out from all true *joy and comfort*, which consists in glorifying and enjoying God. By nature, every man walketh in a vain show; he sees every object in false colours, and distorted shapes, and many of them reversed. His mental vision is so diseased, that it constantly magnifies small things, and diminishes great ones, magnifying the smaller to such a degree, indeed, as often to exclude the larger altogether. It invests the most loathsome things with false fascination, and obscures and disfigures real loveliness. It puts crooked things for straight, and straight for crooked; darkness for light, and light for darkness; confounds right and wrong, bliss and woe, time and eternity.

Nor is it with the spiritual senses as with those of the body, that where one is defective or wanting, the others acquire more than ordinary delicacy and acuteness. Where spiritual *sight* is wanting, alas! spiritual *hearing* is wanting also; the spiritual *tongue* is dumb, the spiritual *touch and taste* are not only blunted, but absolutely wanting, and there is no *savour*, no discernment or perception, of divine things.

Nor is spiritual blindness, like that of the body, capable of being sanctified to those afflicted by it. The loss of bodily eye-sight is often richly compensated by the gain or the increase of mental vision. The eye, now closed to all external objects, to all the charms of nature, on which it used so fondly to gaze, and to those dearer charms, the countenances of beloved friends,—the eye, now no longer the inlet of divine truth to the mind, may, by God's Spirit, be so turned inward and upward, so enlightened to behold the beauties of the spiritual and eternal world, as to reconcile the sufferer to his loss;

nay, to make him thank God for it. But mental blindness is an unmitigated calamity, and as long as we labour under it, we are exposed to every danger, and cut off from every true joy, both here and hereafter. None of us can cure it in his brother, any more than we can give sight to one born blind.

Now, it was to deliver men from this dismal darkness, this fatal blindness, that the eternal Word became 'the Light of the world,' and 'the Light of life.' And we are now to consider, secondly, *In what senses these titles belong to him.*

We begin with the title *Light of Life*, as it best expresses the perfect adaptation of Christ to the double necessity of man's fallen condition. We have seen, that ever since sin entered, man has been '*driven from light into darkness*,' by the judicial sentence of God, forbidding his access to the Divine favour; and also, that he has *loved to remain* in the darkness of unbelief, iniquity, and alienation from his Maker. Now, to deliver from this twofold darkness, no light could be effectual that did not remove both these causes of gloom, that did not open a way for the light of God's countenance again to shine upon men, and, at the same time, open men's eyes to behold that light. And since their eyes were closed in the sleep of *death*, the only light which could avail them must be vivifying, quickening, the *Light of Life;* in other words, it must be the self-existent, the life-giving JEHOVAH. But for Jehovah to become 'the Light of men,' it was necessary that he should veil his glory in human flesh; that he should suffer and die, in order to satisfy Divine justice, and procure for man the gift of the Holy Ghost. Jesus Christ is *the Light*, then, not only because he *reveals* to us the way of salvation, but because *he is Salvation* itself, as the Psalmist sings, 'The Lord

is my Light and my Salvation ; the Lord is the strength of my life.'[1]

In promising Messiah as a *Light* of the people, God promised him also as a *Liberator*.[2] When he came to *open the blind eyes*, he was, at the same time, to say to the prisoners, *Go forth*, and to them that were in darkness, *Shew yourselves ;* thus, with the word of authority and power, bestowing upon the helpless captives at one moment, sight, light, and liberty. This is most truly fulfilled in Jesus as 'the true Light,' 'the Light of Life.' Any light that could have reached fallen man, without his wonderful work of redemption, would but have resembled the sickly lamp of the dungeon, which shows to its wretched inmate the names of his predecessors inscribed on the gloomy walls, with perhaps the instruments of torture under which they have groaned, and the massy iron bolts and bars, which make all hope of escape desperate, and too plainly tell that none can quit the horrible cell but to be led to execution. So, any knowledge that man could have acquired, concerning his present state and future prospects, concerning the law and character of God, and his own character, would only have served to aggravate his misery, had not He who is the Light, become also the Life, the Saviour, the Redeemer of men.

To prove beyond a doubt, that all light, of whatever kind, comes from Christ, he is designated, not merely by the general title of 'the Light of the world,' he is also made known as 'the Morning Star,' 'a Star out of Jacob,' 'the Sun of Righteousness.'

As 'there was light' ere the natural sun was created, and it was thenceforth concentred in that great luminary as its fountain ; so the heavenly light which, from all eternity, dwelt in the Godhead, was, after the fall of

[1] Ps. xxvii. 1. [2] Is. xlii. and xlix.

Adam, concentred in God the Son, that he might be 'THE SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS,' 'THE LIGHT OF MEN,' to enlighten, to warm, and to fertilize the spiritual universe, to be the Centre of attraction, the principle of vitality and motion, the joy of the whole system. This confirms what we have had frequent occasion to remark, that in all the manifestations of Jehovah vouchsafed to the church of old, the Father was declared by the Son, who, as the Angel of the Covenant, made known his will to men. In those manifestations, visible light was very frequently the token of the Divine presence and favour. When Egypt was enveloped in darkness, 'the children of Israel had *light* in their dwellings;' when they wandered in the wilderness, God led them by a *pillar of fire;* and both the Tabernacle and the Temple were so filled with visible *glory*, that at times no man could enter them.

What were all these lights, but the streaks of early dawn, preparatory to the rising Sun? And what were all the predictions and types of Messiah's coming, but similar indications, which increased in brightness as the glorious dawn approached, till within a short period of its rise; when, as is the case in the natural world, the darkness and chill seemed almost greater than ever, when darkness covered the earth, and gross darkness the people? At length, the blessed Sun of Righteousness did arise with healing in his wings.[1] He arose to be 'a Light to the Gentiles,' as well as 'the glory of God's people Israel;' to diffuse the light of revelation and the light of grace amid the gross darkness of Paganism, and the obscurity of Jewish rites; to bring 'life and immortality to light by the gospel.' On the birth of the Saviour, there were a few pious individuals who

[1] Mal. iv. 2.

hailed him as 'the Day-spring from on high,' (or Branch, or Sun-rising), as 'a Light to lighten the Gentiles,' the long promised 'Star out of Jacob,'[1] which was to defend Israel, and destroy his enemies. But in general, 'the Light shone in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.'[2]

In every way, Jesus proved himself the true Sun of Righteousness. He revealed the character, will, and purposes of God, the present duties and future destinies of men, and the only way of salvation, with a clearness, a simplicity, a heavenliness, that infinitely surpassed all former revelations made by all preceding prophets; he also accompanied his words by the life-giving energy of his Spirit, thus opening men's eyes to behold the light. Jesus gave outward and sensible tokens of his power to restore the sight of the soul by restoring that of the body; or rather, by bestowing sight on those who were born blind, a well known attribute of Messiah.[3] And he called the attention of his hearers to the outward miracle, as typical of his office to perform the inward one. When about to give sight to the man who was born blind, he said, 'As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world;' and to the same poor man, when he found him, he said, 'For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.'[4]

During the earthly sojourn of Immanuel, he was, on one occasion, honoured by the Father with visible glory, similar to that which filled the Tabernacle and Temple in ancient times. On 'the holy Mount' 'his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.'

During a short but awful period, the glory of the Sun

[1] Num. xxiv. 17. [2] John i. 5. [3] Is. xxxv. 5.
[4] John ix. 5, 39.

of Righteousness was apparently overcast; thick clouds of sorrow and of wrath eclipsed, for a moment, the brightness of his rays; and the natural sun, as if sympathizing with its Creator, withdrew its light. But this transient gloom was the introduction to a day of more perfect light, of more resplendent lustre, than had ever shone on earth since the days of Paradise. On the morning of the Resurrection, the Sun of Righteousness arose anew, the day of Gospel light commenced with brighter beams than ever, and the strongest pledge was given, that it should 'shine more and more unto the perfect day.' Then the Gentiles began to come to his light, and kings to the brightness of his rising.[1] The foul darkness of Heathenism began to give place to the pure light of Christianity, and the obscure shadows of Mosaic institutions fled away before the clear and spiritual worship of Gospel ordinances. Once, after his ascension, the Lord Jesus manifested himself in the form of bright shining light; it was to arrest Saul the persecutor, and to open the eyes of his understanding to the madness of his course.[2] And, oh! how bright, how comprehensive, how heavenly, was the light vouchsafed to this chiefest Apostle, and through him to the whole Church! How eminent and powerful an instrument has he been, in every succeeding age, 'to open men's eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.'[3]

Since those early hours of the Gospel-morning, the light may seem, to our apprehension, to have made but slow progress. Few parts of the habitable globe, indeed, are now wholly dark. Yet still there are vast portions of it under the power of the Prince of Darkness, 'full of the habitations of cruelty.' A great proportion

[1] Is. lx. 3. [2] Acts ix. 3. [3] Acts xxvi. 18.

of the nominally Christian world is in the night of superstition and ignorance; and even where the Gospel day shines in full brightness, many are groping as in the night. But slow as this progress may appear, and obscured as the light of Gospel Truth at present is, its increasing brightness unto the perfect day is pledged by the light of each returning sun, and as certain as the word of God can make it. Yes, even on earth, the Church shall receive the accomplishment of that promise, 'The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven-fold, as the light of seven days.'[1] And of this promise also, denoting the universal diffusion of the light, 'And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear nor dark:[2] (in the margin, 'It shall not be clear in some places, and dark in other places of the world') :—but it shall come to pass, that at evening-time it shall be light.' And hereafter shall the Church see a day more glorious still, a day that shall know no night; when this word, also, shall be accomplished, 'The sun shall no more be thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting Light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting Light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.'[3]

After viewing our blessed Lord as the *Sun*, it may seem diminishing his glory to view him as a STAR. Yet he condescends to adopt this emblem also; and it suggests some beautiful analogies. Next to the great orb of day itself, and to the moon, 'which giveth light in the night,' no object in the visible creation is so glorious as a star. The fixed stars resemble Christ in this

[1] Is. xxx. 26. [2] Zech. xiv. 6, 7. [3] Is. lx. 19, 20.

respect, that their light is underived, unreflected; they shine as suns. Their unchanged position, relative to each other, may also remind us of Him, who has 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning;' of 'Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' How interesting and how majestic do the heavenly bodies appear, when we reflect, that they have been seen by all generations of our race, as we now see them; that while the earth has gone through so many changes and vicissitudes, 'the Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus,' and 'all the ordinances of heaven,' remain unchanged, as when Job gazed on them with sacred awe.

The valuable properties of a star, as a light shining in darkness, represent also the direction and comfort which the saints receive from Christ, during their passage through this dark wilderness. 'In the night of nature, 'and amidst the darkness of this evil world, Jesus Christ, 'like the true Polar Star, attracts the needle of his 'people's faith and affections to himself, having first 'touched their hearts by the magnetic virtue of his liv-'ing Spirit, which, from thenceforward, by the unerring 'compass of his outward word and secret illumination, 'steers them to the haven (of peace) where they would 'be. Not a vessel, thus directed, can fail of making its 'desired port.'[1]

'The Bright and Morning Star,' was the very last name under which the glorified Saviour revealed himself to the Church.[2] Did not this betoken the approach of such a brilliant light, as, compared with what she now enjoys, shall be as the meridian sun to the morning-star? To this Star, then, let us give heed, 'as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn,' and 'the shadows flee away.'

[1] Serle. [2] Rev. xxii. 16.

The light which Christ vouchsafes to every believer, is, like that which he gives to his Church, gradual; often partially obscured, by clouds of sin, and by consequent hidings of his face, but infallibly increasing. 'His going forth,' in each awakened soul, as in the Church at large, 'is prepared as the morning:'[1] at first, the light is scarcely perceptible; but wherever it truly begins, it will assuredly shine 'more and more, unto the perfect day.'[2]

But, while we rejoice in this blessed assurance, let us earnestly inquire whether the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ has shined into our understandings and our hearts, as well as to our outward senses. For, enjoying, as we do, the full blaze of Gospel light, how fearful will be our condemnation, if we are not walking in the light, not using the precious lamp of truth, which God has given, to guide our feet into the way of his testimonies, and walking 'as children of the light.' With this blessed lamp in our hand, we may pass safely through all the dangers that beset our path. But we must be careful to keep our sight clear from the impurities of sin, hardness of heart, vanity, self-indulgence, and carnality; or rather, we must look to Jesus to anoint our eyes with eye-salve that we may see. Let us willingly come to the searching light of God's Spirit, that our inmost thoughts, our words, and works, may be made manifest, whether or not they are wrought in God. For, let us ever remember, that the light of knowledge, if unattended by the light of sincerity, is the worst of all darkness, the most fatal of all blindness. 'If any man say he hath fellowship with God, and walketh in darkness, he lieth, and doeth not the truth.' 'He that hateth his brother (whatever be his attainments in knowledge), is in darkness.' And the Saviour, while he gra-

[1] Hos. vi. 3. [2] Prov. iv. 18.

ciously healed all that came to him, acknowledging their blindness, and praying for its removal, denounced heavy woes upon them who know not that they are blind, but say, We see.[1] Let us then beseech him to open our eyes; that, with Job, we may so see God, as to abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and in ashes; that we may see wondrous things out of God's law; that, the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.[2]—Above all, that we may so behold the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, as to be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.[3] For, not only are we required to use the light ourselves, but to reflect it for the use of others. Christian ministers and private Christians are, in an inferior sense, *stars*, '*lights in the world;*' appointed to hold forth the word of life, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation;[4] to shine, not in their own light, for they have none, but by reflecting the rays of heaven, in their lives and conversation. Oh! how humbling and rousing is the question, Are we letting our light *so* shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven? And what a stimulus to our humble efforts for the conversion of others, is this promise of our God, 'They that turn many to righteousness, shall shine as the *stars* for ever and ever.'[5] Our Saviour's promise is more glorious still, of the reward awaiting his people above. 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the *sun* in the kingdom of their Father.'[6] Their glory then shall be full, because no clouds shall ever intercept the light of the Sun of Righteousness;

[1] Rev. iii. 17; John ix. 41. [2] Eph. i. 18. [3] 2 Cor. iii. 18.
[4] Mat. v. 14–16; Phil. ii. 15. [5] Dan. xii. 3. [6] Matt. xiii. 43.

'There shall be no night there,' for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the Light of that city.

In the prosecution of this work, we are frequently reminded of a glass prism, which, by separating the rays of light, causes each to impart its own bright hue to the objects on which it falls; for each office of our blessed Lord, as it comes before us, seems to colour every part of the Bible, and every relation of man to God; whereas the Person of Immanuel, viewed as a whole, diffuses a glorious light over the whole Sacred Volume, and, like the sun in the natural world, displays every object in its true colour, form, and proportion. God grant that, by the use of this prism, we may learn better to appreciate the undivided light of the Sun of Righteousness.

ESSAY XXVIII.

AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH.

Jesus is here presented to us in a title delightfully significant. It occurs only once in the sacred oracles;[1] but what the Spirit of Truth says once, is as sure as if said a thousand times; and what he testifies of Jesus, especially, though but once testified, is sure to be confirmed by the whole tenor of Scripture.

There is a beautiful harmony between the different offices of Christ, whereby each lends confirmation to, and receives confirmation from, all the rest. Thus, had Jesus not been even once distinctly revealed as 'the Author and Finisher of our faith,' we might almost have inferred that he sustained that office, from knowing that he is 'the Last Adam,' 'the Life,' and 'the Light.' While contemplating our Lord as *Covenant-Head* of his people, we found that he conveys to them all imaginable blessings, by a covenant purely *of grace*. Now, *faith* being required, as the indispensable *condition* of access into a covenant-relation with God, Christ must be the Author and Finisher of that condition; otherwise it would not be entirely a covenant of grace, but man would have some merit in gaining an interest in it.

Again, seeing that Christ is *The Life* of his people,

[1] Heb. xii. 2.

the Author and Preserver of their life, from its commencement in the new birth, to its perfection in immortal bliss, and that the life they live in the flesh is the *life of faith;* he must be the Author and Finisher of that vital prineiple, whereby his people are quickened at first, and kept alive ever after.

Further, since Christ is *the Light of Life*, it follows that he must be the Anthor and Finisher of faith; for, faith being the *eye* of the soul, wherewith it sees things invisible, the *window* whereby it admits the light of divine truth, he who is the Author of Light and of Sight, must be also the Author of Faith.

We may trace the unity of operation between the saered Persons of the Trinity, in that the precious gift of faith is aseribed sometimes to the Father,[1] at other times to the Holy Ghost,[2] sometimes to God, without distinction of Persons,[3] and in this place[4] to the Son, through whom alone every blessed gift from the Godhead flows to sinful men.

A most important plaee, in the economy of Redemption, is assigned to Faith. Through it we obtain an interest in the great propitiation in Christ's blood;[5] by faith we are justified, and have access to God;[6] by faith we are purified in heart,[7] sanctified,[8] and enabled to overcome the world.[9] By faith we are comforted,[10] we have Christ dwelling in our hearts,[11] and are made children of God.[12] In short, through faith we are saved,[13] made wise unto salvation,[14] and kept by the power of God unto everlasting salvation.[15]

[1] Mat. xvi. 17. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 10. [3] Eph. ii. 8.
[4] Heb. xii. 2. [5] Rom. iii. 25. [6] Rom. v. 1, 2.
[7] Acts xv. 9. [8] Acts xxvi. 18. [9] 1 John v. 4.
[10] Rom. i. 12. [11] Eph. iii. 17. [12] Gal. iii. 26.
[13] Eph. ii. 8. [14] 2 Tim. iii. 15. [15] 1 Pet. i. 5.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ was the one only requisite for salvation, in the preaching of the apostles. 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,'[1] was their answer to all inquiring sinners. But what stamps with the highest value this principle of faith, is the pre-eminent place it occupied, in the instructions of the Lord Jesus himself. No other mental quality was so highly commended by him, nor was the want of any so severely censured. He particularly noticed the strength or the weakness of faith, in all those who approached him; and rewarded it, wherever sincere, with the greatest blessings, both temporal and spiritual.

Faith in himself, as the Messiah, was the great work to which he exhorted his hearers; '*This* is the work of God, that ye *believe* on him whom he hath sent;'[2] and unbelief in him he declared to be certain and everlasting ruin; 'If ye *believe not* that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.'[3] Upon this single thread he suspended life and death, salvation and condemnation; saying, 'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.'[4]

Seeing, then, the paramount and incalculable importance of this 'precious faith,' it must be of the greatest consequence to have a right conception of its nature; and, simple as the term appears, it is yet understood in a great variety of ways, and has occasioned interminable controversies.

While some regard faith as a bare speculative assent to the truths of Christianity, of the same kind as the assent they yield to any other facts, the authenticity of which they have never doubted; others include in faith all those graces and dispositions which necessarily flow

[1] Acts xvi. 31.
[2] John vi. 29.
[3] John viii. 24.
[4] Mark xvi. 16.

from and attend it; thus confounding the tree with its fruits, the cause with its effects. While Christians of one class insist upon full assurance of our own salvation, as essential to faith, and accuse all who fall short of this of making God a liar, by disbelieving the record he has given of his Son; the great proportion of mankind seem to think it matters little what they believe, provided they are *sincere* in their profession, and tolerably conscientious in the discharge of moral obligations. The most general notion of faith, among those who really desire to understand its meaning, seems to be, that it resides in the *heart*, as much or more than in the understanding; and includes choice, desire, affection, &c. This idea they draw from what appears to us a misconception of St Paul's assertion, that 'with the *heart* man believeth unto righteousness;' supposing that the distinction drawn by the apostle is between the working of the affections and the exercise of the understanding, not between the consent of the mind and the confession of the lips, 'For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.'[1]

But, happily, we are not left to discover the nature of this gracious principle, from the varying opinions of fallible man: the Holy Ghost has revealed it to us by the pen of an inspired apostle. St Paul tells us, '*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*'[2] It gives such realizing, substantiating views of things invisible, whether 'hoped for' as desirable, or feared as terrible, that they seem actually present with us; we feel as certain of their reality, as if we saw them with our bodily eyes, or touched and handled them. We have certain demonstration and conviction of their existence. Faith, therefore, does not include any moral dispo-

[1] Rom. x. 10. [2] Heb. xi. 1.

sition, or bias of the affections; but merely *assent*, or *persuasion of the truth of a testimony.* * The idea that faith includes repentance, love, new obedience, or even a choice of, and cleaving to Christ, is very congenial to the pride and self-righteousness of the heart: the man who dislikes the doctrine of justification by faith alone, is easily reconciled to it, if you allow any of these dispositions to form parts of faith; because then he can secretly take some merit in his own salvation. This, of itself, is sufficient to prove the unsoundness of the idea; for the position assigned to faith, in the economy of Redemption, is assigned it, for this very purpose, that salvation may be seen to be all of grace. '*Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace.*'[1] *Therefore* the salvation of every sinner is ascribed to *faith*, because faith has no moral efficacy towards procuring his pardon and acceptance, but is merely the channel, whereby he receives the free mercy of God, and the blood and righteousness of Christ, which are the sole procuring causes of his salvation.

Again, faith cannot consist absolutely in believing that we ourselves are already saved; for '*faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*'[2] Faith must refer to a testimony; to something revealed in the word of God, which was true, before we believed it, and which would have continued true, although we had died in un-

[1] Rom. iv. 16. [2] Rom. x. 17.

* I am aware that the view of faith here adopted, may be objected to, as requiring the exercise of the understanding, to the exclusion of that of the heart. I trust, however, that after a careful perusal of the whole Essay, it will be found to assign to the heart its proper share in the work; and that, however I may differ from some of my readers in the manner of stating this subject, we are agreed in the most essential point, viz. that the Holy Ghost is the sole and indispensable agent in producing faith, whether in the understanding or the heart of fallen man.

belief. Now, it is evident that, in the case of an unbeliever, this could not be part of the divine record. That assurance of our own salvation is necessary to our progress and stability in holiness and in comfort, we firmly maintain; but we deny its forming part of 'the record that God has given of his Son,' and which he commands every man, on pain of eternal death, to believe.

To many sincere believers it may appear a bare and cold definition of faith to call it merely *assent* or *persuasion*. They may inquire, How, then, are we to distinguish the assent given by true faith, from the assent of the careless multitude, who are evidently not under the influence ascribed to faith, and yet seem undoubtingly to credit the word of God? It shall be our object, in this Essay, to draw the distinction required: and we trust it may be found sufficiently broad, without forcing into the word faith, things which, in common language, it does not signify, and which, in Scripture language, it cannot, in many cases, admit of. The meaning of the word '*believe*,' in the following texts, is plain. 'But, behold, they will not believe me.[1]' 'Woman, believe me, the hour cometh:'[2] and we need not attach to it, in other places, a mysterious or complicated meaning, fully to perceive its value.

True faith, then, differs from nominal faith, in the *truths believed*, in the *nature of assent* given, and in the *grounds* or *foundation of that assent*. *

To ascertain the difference, in the first of these points, we must inquire, *What are the truths*, a belief of which is necessary to the saving of the soul?—True faith ere-

[1] Exod. iv. 1. [2] John iv. 21.

* This definition, with much of the substance of the foregoing and following pages, is borrowed from a Dissertation on the Nature of Christian Faith, by the late Dr John Erskine.

dits the whole word of God, as far as it is made known to it. But there is *one grand fundamental truth*, belief in which constitutes a Christian, even where much ignorance may exist on minor points. This truth is expressed in various forms in Scripture, such as the following:—'The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;'[1]—'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;'[2]—'Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.'[3] Now, this truth, all who call themselves Christians, profess to believe. But, if they understand not the terms of their creed, and attach to those terms a signification quite different from that in which God employs them, this cannot be *believing* the record that God has given of his Son. This is not *knowing in whom they believe!* Alas! many who profess a belief that '*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God*,' know 'neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.' For they know not the unspeakable dignity and glory of Jesus, as the *Son*, as the equal and fellow of the Father, one with him in eternal power and Godhead, and in every divine perfection. Their views, therefore, of the love of the Father in sending his Son, and of the love and condescension of the Son in giving himself, of the worth and efficacy of his atonement, of the merit of his righteousness, and of his ability to carry on the work which he has begun, must be very superficial and defective. Then, what does it avail, to say we believe in Christ as our *Saviour*, if we know not what *salvation* is; if we are still insensible to our lost state, which requires so great salvation, and know not that it implies deliverance from the dominion and pollution of sin, as well as from its guilt and punishment, a begun conformity to the image of God here, and fulness of joy hereafter? Or,

[1] 1 John iv. 14. [2] Mat. xvi. 16. [3] 1 Tim. i. 15.

how can we be said to believe in Jesus as the *Christ*, unless we know something of his eternal appointment to the office of Mediator; of the anointing of the Spirit poured out upon him; of the fulness of grace that dwells in him, equal to all the necessities of all his people, and of the power given to him in heaven and in earth?

A true belief in the *Sonship*, *Messiahship*, and *Salvation of Jesus*, necessarily includes belief in the infinite evil of sin; in the tremendous justice and spotless purity of God; in the total inability of man to save himself, either by satisfying divine vengeance due to his sins, or by curing the depravity of his nature; and thus convinces the sinner that his salvation must be entirely of free grace. But, where erroneous or defective views are taken of this one great truth, all other truths are seen with proportionable dimness. Nor let it be supposed that the difference consists merely in degrees of faith and of evangelical light. The difference consists in believing, or believing not. For he who believes a testimony to be something which it is not, or not to be what it is, cannot be said to believe it at all.

But it must be owned there are many unbelievers who have orthodox sentiments concerning salvation, who can state clearly and correctly all the great truths of the gospel, and understand their harmony and mutual bearing. How, then, are *they* to be distinguished from the true believer? To answer this question, we must proceed to the *second* point above stated, viz. that *saving faith differs from nominal, in the nature of assent* which it yields; and here we refer again to the apostolic definition, 'Now, faith is the *substance* of things hoped for, the *evidence* of things not seen.' The truth of this definition the apostle abundantly proves, in the cases of the ancient worthies, which he adduces in illustration of

it.[1] The faith of Noah, in things '*not seen as yet*,' so realized the coming destruction, that he prepared an ark for the saving of his house. The faith of Abraham so substantiated the inheritance promised to his seed, that he willingly left his own country, and dwelt in tabernacles in a strange land, looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. His reliance on God's promises was so firm and strong, that he was ready to offer up 'the son of promise,' thus apparently making the fulfilment of them impossible. The prophetic blessings pronounced by Isaac and Jacob on their posterity, and the commandment of Joseph concerning the removal of his bones, showed how firmly their faith rested on the promises, how it substantiated and brought near things unseen and distant. The faith of Moses, in the blessedness of being numbered with the people of God, and in the misery of being found among his enemies, made him renounce the splendid prospects and present indulgences of Egypt, and cast in his lot with the oppressed and afflicted Israelites. The reason given for his choice applies to every exercise of faith, 'He endured, *as seeing him who is invisible.*' And the description of those ancient believers, generally, agrees with the definition of faith above given: they had not received the promises, but had *seen them afar off*, and been *persuaded* of them, and *embraced* them, and *confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.*[2] This, then, is the great peculiarity of faith, that it *realizes things invisible and future*, so as to make their influence not only rival, but counteract and subdue, the influence of things present and visible. Now, we suppose few nominal believers will pretend that their faith resembles that of Moses or of Abraham, leading

[1] Heb. xi. throughout. [2] Heb. xi. 13.

them to forego the most tempting worldly advantages, and to suffer the most severe losses and afflictions here, for the sake of the favour of God, and in hope of an eternal 'recompence of reward.' Yet, such have been found among the votaries of false religion. It must be, then, such a faith *in Jesus, as the Christ, the Son of the living God*, and in all the truths necessarily flowing therefrom, as influences us to look not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at the things which are not seen and eternal; as makes us take joyfully all earthly losses and disappointments, knowing in ourselves, that we have in heaven a better and an enduring substance;[1] as makes us 'walk by faith, not by sight.'[2]

But, *thirdly*, Christian faith differs from mere nominal faith, not only in the *truths believed*, and in the *nature of assent* given, but in the *grounds or foundation of assent*. If *faith* signified no more than the passive mechanical assent that multitudes give to the truths of Revelation, we cannot suppose it would have been so solemnly declared that *faith is the gift of God;*[3] that '*no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.*'[4] The generality of professors find no difficulty in confessing that 'Jesus is the Lord;' and yet they are not conscious of any thing supernatural or divine in the way they have learned this great truth. They believe it, just as they believe any other facts, either by educational habit, or upon examination of external evidence, without special aid from the Holy Ghost. But the true believer, while he thankfully studies the external evidences of Revelation, has evidence of another kind, peculiar to himself. God has shined into his heart, giving the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ.[5] The

[1] Heb. x. 34. [2] 2 Cor. v. 7. [3] Eph. ii. 8.
[4] 1 Cor. xii. 3. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 6.

Spirit of Truth, who inspired the Scriptures, can alone carry home such a witness to the heart, as enables it savingly to believe them; and, when this takes place in any soul, a flood of light breaks in upon it, displaying the person and offices of Christ, in such beauty, excellency, and glory, as captivates the affections, subdues the will, and convinces, by a demonstration not to be described, that a scheme so glorious could have none but God for its Author. The truths formerly credited on external evidence, seem altogether different, when brought home to the soul by this internal demonstration. They seem indeed never to have been believed before, their all-commanding influence was so little felt. Now, does not the experience of many amongst us testify, that their belief in the Gospel does not procced from the witness of the Spirit, from his taking of the things of Christ, and showing them unto them, but from mere natural grounds? If so, let them humbly entreat the Father to reveal to them the Sonship and Messiahship of the Lord Jesus, in a manner that flesh and blood cannot reveal them.[1]

Lastly, *True faith is distinguished from nominal, by its effects.* The first of these is a *personal application* of the salvation wrought by Christ. We say not a positive assurance that it is already ours, but such a sense of our need of it, and of God's willingness to bestow it upon us, as determines us to seek it earnestly, perseveringly, importunately, and to renounce every thing that might endanger it,—such views of the perfect suitableness of the Saviour to our perishing souls, as makes us *receive* him cordially, *come* to him, *embrace* and *cleave* to him, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, and esteem all that we can render him too little to express our infinite obligations. *

[1] Mat. xvi. 16.

* Faith is in the understanding, in respect of its being and sub-

When a sinner rightly understands and believes the threatenings of God's law, and the promises of his Gospel, he must necessarily shun the former, and embrace the latter: for, 'to know any thing to be greatly desirable, and yet not to desire it; or, to be extremely 'dreadful, and yet not to dread it, and to do our utmost 'to avoid it, is contrary to human nature.'[1] We all know the truth of this remark, as regards temporal things. If we heard a man informed that his house was on fire, and yet saw that he moved not from the place where he was standing, could we have any doubt whether or not he *believed* the report? Or, if a man were offered great riches in a certain line of business, and yet preferred toiling on in another, in which nothing but loss could be looked for, would he be thought sincere in saying he *believed* the former to be best? Why, then, do we reason so foolishly on heavenly things, as to fancy they can be *believed*, and yet *not acted upon*, but for this reason, that the god of this world has blinded our minds to their real excellency and importance?

When we do believe, with any portion of the Spirit's teaching, *Who* our Redeemer is, *what* he has done and suffered for us, *from what* he delivers us, and *to what* he appoints us, every motive in the human breast is stirred into active energy. Love, hatred, joy, sorrow, hope, fear, jealousy, circumspection, all spring into action, and we begin to walk as Christ also walked, to have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus. In short, by beholding, in the glass of the Gospel, the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.[2]

Do not these considerations force upon us the melan-

sistence; in the will and heart, in respect of its effectual workings.—Dr Owen.

[1] Erskine.

[2] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

choly conclusion, that 'all men have not faith?' Nay, that so rare is this blessed principle, that the ministers of Christ, even in these days of Gospel light and privilege, have reason to complain, in the words of the prophet of old, 'Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?'

It is true we cannot read the hearts of our fellow men; and we should be very cautious in pronouncing on the belief or unbelief of individuals. But when we see men manifestly despising the favour of God, trampling upon his laws, living for themselves and the world, all the days of vigour and freshness, devoting only the last dregs of life (if these are granted them) to God, and to preparation for eternity; neglecting the cause and service of Christ, and seeking intensely the riches, honours, and indulgences of this perishing world;—when we see all this, can we, by any stretch of what is called *charity*, suppose that these persons are possessed of that faith which is 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen?' They cannot believe the awful strictness of God's law, requiring, even from those who are freed from its penalty, constant and unreserved obedience; they cannot believe the favour of God to be better than life, and his wrath to be worse than death; or they could not possibly neglect and despise the one Mediator, through whom alone they can gain the former, and escape the latter. They cannot believe that Christ requires his followers to forsake all for his sake and the Gospel's; to deny themselves; to separate from an evil world; to watch and pray always; to set their affections on things above, and seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; otherwise they could not live and act as they do. It will not avail to say, such persons may *believe* the doctrines and duties of the Gos-

pel, though they have not the courage or self-command, necessary for acting upon their faith. If they did believe, and *know* what they believed, it would require far more courage to disobey than to obey; even the fatal courage which runs upon the thick bosses of the Almighty's buckler,[1] and courts everlasting destruction.

To this complaint, of the unbelief of the generality of professing Christians, must be added, alas! the confession of true believers, that their faith is sadly weak, inconstant, and inefficient; that they often believe the lies of Satan, more than the faithful promises of their God; that they find it difficult to trust in him, when present appearances are against the fulfilment of his promises; that their views of things above are still very dim; and that they live too much at home in this present world; too little 'as strangers and pilgrims,' as those who 'seek a better country, even an heavenly.' Especially, they have to lament the inconstancy of their dependance on Christ, the listlessness with which they often view the cross; how little they realize and appropriate the wonders of redeeming grace. To the weakness of their faith they justly trace their remissness in every other duty, inward and outward; the shallowness of their repentance, the coldness of their love, the dimness of their hope, the feebleness of their efforts in all good works.

Under these painful views of the unbelief that we see around, and feel within us, how consoling is the invitation held out by the Apostle, '*to look unto Jesus*' as '*the Author and Finisher of our faith.*'[2] How encouraging is it to reflect, that this precious gift is not in our own treacherous keeping, nor in that of a fellow-creature, but safely deposited in His hands, who loved us and

[1] Job xv. 26. [2] Heb. xii. 2.

gave himself for us! The title belongs to him, as he is the 'Author and Finisher' of that salvation, of which by faith we are made partakers; as the great Revealer of that salvation; and as the most illustrious Example of faith during his state of incarnation. For, although he needed not, as we do, faith to justify him before God, being himself the Just One; he did need faith in the covenant engagements of the Father and of the Spirit, to uphold him under his stupendous work; and he did not disdain to draw support, amid present sorrows, from the prospect of future joys: for the Apostle tells us, that 'for the joy set before him,' he endured the cross, despising the shame. Jesus himself, then, was supported by that faith which is 'the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.' And we are taught by St Paul, to look off from the greatest human examples of faith, that we may fix our stedfast contemplation on Him, from whom all the patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, and saints *received* their faith, and who incomparably eclipsed them all; to '*consider* him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself.'

But in an especial sense, the title we are studying belongs to Jesus, as he, by his Spirit, *works faith in the souls of his people, and having begun the work, carries it on to perfection.*

Let us, therefore, look unto him more closely in this character, and inquire *by what means he bestows and increases faith.* The two great means which Jesus employs for this work, are his *Word* and his *Providence;* but he often increases his people's faith without the direct use of either of these means, *by his immediate communications to their souls.*

In each of these three ways, the Lord Jesus wrought faith in his disciples during his earthly ministry. It

was by a Divine light shed upon ancient Scripture, and upon his own words, that he convinced them he was the true Messiah. He confirmed this conviction by his *miracles;* but, that miraculous evidence is less convincing than that of the word, he testified, by declaring, 'If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' And this declaration was verified, both in the hardened unbelief of multitudes who witnessed his miracles, and heard of his resurrection; and in the comparative effect of those two sorts of evidences, that of miracles and of the word, upon the faith of the Apostles. Long before their Master's death, they believed in him, so as even to perform miracles themselves in his name; and yet they had no spiritual, realizing, substantiating apprehensions of his kingdom and offices, till after his resurrection, when he 'opened their understandings that they might understand the Scriptures;' and till after his ascension, when he sent down the Holy Ghost still further to illuminate their minds, and convince them that all the testimony of Scripture was fulfilled in himself. Thus, the Apostles' faith *came by hearing*, and their *hearing by the word of God.* And this is still the grand and indispensable means of producing faith in men's souls. The word of God, whether heard, read, or otherwise communicated, is the only guide and object of faith, and whatever is not there recorded, we cannot be required to believe. Where Jesus implants faith, he always makes it grow; and the word is abundantly effectual for this purpose; the more enlarged our knowledge of the word of Christ, the firmer will be the grasp of our faith, and the broader its basis.

The other principal means employed by Christ for beginning and carrying on the work of faith, is his *Providence;* and of this also we see illustrations in his deal-

ings with the disciples. He often brought them into new and trying circumstances, for the purpose of displaying his power and willingness to deliver them. He sent them forth to preach, without any provision for their bodily wants; yet he could appeal to their experience, on returning, that they had lacked nothing. He brought their feeble bark into the raging tempest, that, at the moment of their extremity, he might calm the furious elements, saying, 'Peace, be still.'

Notwithstanding their repeated experience of his Almighty power and watchful guardianship, the faith of the disciples still remained weak and wavering; and they received, in consequence, many severe rebukes from their Master. These rebukes, however, were the strongest marks of his love, intended not to discourage, but to strengthen them; and they were generally followed by some new proof of his benignity. Similar means are still used by our blessed Lord to try and to strengthen his people's faith; and similar, alas! are their unbelief and carnality, which bring upon them his faithful rebukes. He has still occasion to say to them, 'Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?' 'Do ye not remember?' 'Where is your faith?' And still he makes them ashamed of their unbelieving fears, by his timely and unlooked-for deliverances.

Those Christians who have been most severely tried by Providential dispensations, are often the most eminent in faith, and, consequently, in other graces of which faith is the root. On this account, young Christians are sometimes inclined to pray for affliction, as if the Lord could not carry on his good work in their hearts without it. But God is not confined to one mode of working; nor does he teach all his children in one way. As sharp afflictions cannot increase faith, unless the Spirit

sanctify them to this end, so Christ can increase faith without them. All believers are not cast into the furnace of outward affliction, neither do they all suffer intensely from inward griefs, though of these last every one must have a share.

But all believers experience the power of Jesus to impart faith, in the *third* manner mentioned above, viz. *by directly manifesting himself to their souls.* His grace is absolutely necessary to render effectual either the ministry of his Word, or the dealings of his Providence; but he often bestows grace without the direct use of means, as he did, while on earth, by direct manifestations. These direct manifestations are, it is true, evidences of the believer's own interest in the salvation of Christ, rather than of the truth of salvation itself; but they afford to him who enjoys them, the most affecting testimonies to the character and offices of Jesus. Faith obtained in this way, however, must be grounded upon knowledge of the word, and tested by the dispositions and conduct which flow from it, otherwise we are in danger of deceiving ourselves, by mistaking for the teaching of Christ the fancies of our own brain, or the lying errors of Satan.

First, it must be *grounded upon knowledge of the word*, and, therefore, *agreeable to the word.* Let us take an instance or two from the Gospels. Nathaniel believed that Jesus of Nazareth was '*the Son of God*' and '*the King of Israel*,' because he said unto him, 'I saw thee under the fig-tree.' But had Nathaniel not known, from the study of Moses and the prophets, that Messiah was to be possessed of all Divine attributes, the Omniscience and Omnipresence displayed by Jesus of Nazareth would have conveyed to his mind no sound evidence that he was the true Messiah.

In like manner, the woman of Sychar received direct personal manifestation of the Messiahship of Jesus, when he said to her, 'I that speak unto thee am He,' and when he told her all that ever she did. But had she and her fellow-citizens not formed correct notions from Scripture what kind of Prophet the Messiah was to be, they could not have recognised in Jesus 'the Christ, the Saviour of the world.'

Again, the disciples, who ate and drank with Jesus after he rose from the dead, could no more doubt his resurrection, than they could doubt their own existence. But their conviction of the truth of that event would have conveyed no saving knowledge to their minds, had they not understood and believed from Scripture, and from his own words, the blessed ends for which Messiah died and rose again.

Secondly, these personal discoveries of Jesus and of his offices *must be tried by the dispositions and conduct which flow from them.*

When Levi the publican heard the voice of Jesus, saying, 'Follow me,' he experienced the exertion of his Kingly power, constraining him instantaneously to leave his covetous occupation, and follow the self-denying footsteps of the Saviour. When the female penitent, who stood behind Jesus, weeping, heard his gracious words, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace;' she experienced the exertion of his authority as Priest, to cleanse from sin, and speak peace to the wounded conscience. The Apostles experienced the Prophetical power of Jesus, when their minds were so wonderfully enlightened, after his ascension. And their inward experience was proved genuine, by both the tests we have mentioned: it was *in fulfilment of the word of God*, and it was *accompanied by corresponding disposi-*

tions and conduct, in the most eminent degree. The faith of St Paul had its beginning in a most remarkable direct manifestation of the Saviour, when he was arrested in the way and heard those astonishing words, 'I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest.' We may suppose, that at first, he would be so overwhelmed and engrossed by the vision itself, as to lose sight of every thing else. But when the first excitement was over, his faith would be confirmed, and his experience proved genuine, by comparing the revelation personally made to him with that contained in the written word; and also, by discovering the complete change which had been wrought in his affections, judgment, will, and pursuits.

Miraculous tokens of the Saviour's presence are no longer to be expected; nor can we now hear his human voice: but still he manifests himself to his people, as he does not unto the world, and convinces them that he is God their Saviour, by the wonderful things he does for their souls.

But it may be objected, Does not the view here given of faith, as entirely the gift of God, weaken our sense of personal obligation to use means for increasing our own faith? We reply, The view here given is, we trust, not our own, but that of the Scripture. Whoever impartially studies the sacred volume, will find clear evidence, that no man can believe except it be given him from above. But he will find evidence equally clear, that it is the bounden duty of all who are within the sound of the Gospel to believe it, and that all will be condemned who persist in unbelief. He will find, that although 'God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith;'[1] and although 'Jesus is the Author and Finisher of our faith;' still men are upbraided for the want or the

[1] Rom. xii. 3.

weakness of their faith. This difficulty, though confessedly great, is not greater than that which belongs to other branches of Christian duty. We are commanded to perform all righteousness, and abstain from all evil: while, at the same time, we have no power in ourselves to do good, or refrain from evil. In both cases, we are called upon, not to explain, but to obey; not to argue, but to act. And in the case of believing, we are to look unto Jesus for the gift of faith, as simply as if we used no means ourselves; and yet, to be as diligent in the use of means as if we could by our own power acquire it.

What then are the means we must employ to increase our faith? These may be gathered from the means which Jesus employs for the same end; viz. *hearing and reading the Word*, observing the dealings of *Providence*, and opening our hearts to *communion with Jesus, in meditation and prayer.*

Above all other means for obtaining faith, *Prayer* rises pre-eminent; for in prayer, we open our hearts and minds to the direct influence of the Spirit of Christ; and it is delightful to find, in the gospel history, warrants to apply to Christ himself for this precious gift. He actually assumed the office of 'Author and Finisher of faith,' by the favourable reception he gave to petitions for the increase of this grace. Had such petitions been improper, he would, no doubt, have reproved those who offered them. But, on the contrary, he showed them marked approbation. One of these petitions has encouraged many a poor trembling sinner to approach the Saviour, under the painful struggle between faith and unbelief: 'Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.'[1] The other was offered by the Apostles, when enjoined by their Master to perform certain difficult duties:—'The Apostles said

[1] Mark ix. 24.

unto the Lord, Increase our faith.'[1] And not only do we find that our Lord favourably received prayers for faith; we find that he also gave, unsolicited, a promise to uphold faith, in the most difficult circumstances: 'Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.'[2]

If then we would 'stand fast in the faith,' 'continue' in it 'rooted and grounded,' and have our faith 'grow exceedingly,' as was the desire of the Apostles, for themselves and their brethren; let us simply 'look unto Jesus,' and diligently use every means of his appointment. We are too apt to imagine that faith, once implanted in us, will grow and bear fruit of itself, without either our own labour, or the special aid of Jesus. But painful experience convinces us, sooner or later, how false is this imagination. We find that our faith can lie, for a long season, dormant, producing little or no fruit; and we are almost ashamed to tell the world how great things faith accomplishes, while it is doing so little in ourselves. We cannot have better advice on this subject than that of the pious Leighton. Speaking of the growth of faith, and the consequent growth of love, he says,—

'If you would have it grow, turn the spiritual eye 'frequently to him that is the proper object of it; for 'even they that are believers may possibly abate of their 'love and esteem of Christ, by suffering faith to be dead 'within them, and not using it in beholding and apply-'ing of Christ. And the world, or some particular vani-'ties may insensibly creep in, and get into the heart, and 'cost them much pains ere they can be thrust out again. 'But when they are daily reviewing those excellencies 'that are in Christ, which first persuaded their hearts to

[1] Luke xvii. 5. [2] Luke xxii. 31, 32.

'love him, and discovering still more and more of them,
'his love will certainly grow, and will chase away those
'follies that the world doats upon, as unworthy to be
'taken notice of by such a soul.'

Lord God, be pleased to fulfil in all thy people all the good pleasure of thy goodness, and the work of faith with power; that their faith may grow exceedingly, and that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them, and they in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

ESSAY XXIX.

OUR JUSTIFICATION—THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.

The doctrines of Christianity, and the offices of its blessed Author, are so closely interwoven, that it is impossible to treat of one, without touching upon several others. The doctrine of our Justification by the Righteousness of Christ, is so prominent and fundamental a point, in the scheme of redemption, that it has necessarily entered into almost every view in which we have contemplated the Redeemer. The vast importance, however, of this Title, the Watch-word of the Reformers, demands a separate and particular examination: and after the general view of Faith, attempted to be given in the last Essay, we naturally turn to the first and chiefest *effect* of faith, that of *justifying* the believer.

The two great parts of salvation are Justification and Sanctification; the inseparable connexion of which we have repeatedly noticed. They may be said to differ as follows,—

'Justification is the absolution of a sinner from the 'guilt of sin and death; whereas Sanctification is an al- 'teration of qualities from evil to good. Justification 'consists of remission of sins, through the imputation of 'Christ's righteousness; Sanctification is the renovation 'of nature by the Holy Spirit. Justification is perfect 'in this life; so is not Sanctification. Justification is 'in order of nature, before Sanctification; but not in

'order of time.'[1] There is no precedence in order of time; for, in effectual calling, these two acts of God's grace are simultaneous; the faith which justifies the sinner being itself the beginning of his sanctification. But Justification is *before* Sanctification, in the same sense that a man's *title* to an inheritance is *before* his *possession* of it; although the first fruits of the inheritance may be put into his hands at the same moment with the title-deed which secures it to him.

In pursuance, then, of the 'order of nature,' we proceed, in humble dependance on the teaching of God, to study first the doctrine of Justification; to consider the Lord Jesus Christ, as 'MADE UNTO US RIGHTEOUSNESS;'[2] as 'THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS;'[3] as 'JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS;'[4] as 'HIM IN WHOM WE ARE JUSTIFIED.'[5]

'To be *justified* is a term taken from the forms of law, 'and signifies, to be acquitted, or pronounced innocent, 'and to come off victorious in a cause.'[6] 'It seems in-'deed, in the Scripture, to mean even more than this; 'namely, to be accounted or dealt with, not merely as '*innocent*, which merely exempts from punishment; but 'as *righteous*, and entitled to the reward of righteous-'ness.'[7] That this last definition is just, appears, by the manner in which St Paul, in the 4th chapter of Romans, quotes the words of David, in the 32d Psalm. The Psalmist had made no direct mention of *imputed righteousness;* but he had extolled the blessedness of the man whose *sin was covered*, and to whom the Lord *would not impute iniquity*. The apostle, however, recognises the principle, that no man can stand in a neutral position before God, neither liable to punishment nor

[1] Cruden. [2] 1 Cor. i. 30. [3] Rom. x. 4.
[4] Jer. xxiii. 6. [5] Rom. iii. 24. [6] Lowth. [7] Scott.

entitled to reward, by using, as synonymous terms, *iniquity not imputed*, and *righteousness imputed*. 'Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.'

'*Righteousness* is the active and passive obedience of 'Christ, whereby he perfectly fulfilled the law, and pro- 'pitiated the justice of God; which obedience being im- 'puted to the elect, and received by faith, their sins are 'pardoned, their persons accepted, and they are brought 'to eternal glory.[1] This righteousness, whereby a sin- 'ner is justified, is called *the righteousness of God*,[2] be- 'cause it is of God's institution, ordination, and appoint- 'ment, and which alone he will accept of to life; or, be- 'cause it was performed by Him who is God as well as 'Man, and is therefore of infinite value and merit; or, 'because it is opposed to the righteousness of works, or 'man's own righteousness.[3] It is called also *the righte- 'ousness of faith*,[4] because it is apprehended and applied 'by faith. And it is called *the law of righteousness*,[5] in 'opposition to *that* law of righteousness, by which the 'unbelieving Jews sought to be justified. Christ is 'called The Lord our Righteousness; that is, the 'Procurer and Bestower of all that righteousness and 'holiness that is in believers.'[6]

As Righteousness, or Justification, is expressed in various terms in Scripture, so also is the mode by which we partake of it. We are said to be justified *by Christ*,[7] *by his blood*,[8] *by his resurrection*,[9] *by grace freely*,[10] *through*

[1] Dan. ix. 24. [2] Rom. i. 17. [3] Rom. x. 3.
[4] Rom. iv. 13. [5] Rom. ix. 31. [6] Cruden.
[7] Gal. ii. 17. [8] Rom. v. 9. [9] Rom. iv. 25.
[10] Rom. iii. 24.

faith,[1] *by the knowledge of Christ*,[2] *by works and not by faith only*.[3]

These terms, though apparently varying, are in perfect harmony, and express one simple act. We are justified by *faith*, or a right belief in Christ, flowing from a right *knowledge* of his Person, work, and offices; but this not as if faith were in itself a meritorious act, entitling us either to pardon or reward; faith is 'the gift of God;' and, in that sense, therefore, to be 'justified by faith,' is to be justified '*by God's grace, freely:*' but, further still, faith, when received, is not the procuring cause of justification, but merely the channel through which we partake of it. The Righteousness of Christ, including his perfect obedience and all-sufficient atonement, is the only procuring cause of justification; therefore we are justified *by Christ*, and *by his blood;* the efficacy of this Righteousness was attested by his *resurrection*, and the justifying faith of believers is proved genuine *by their good works*.

The parts of Holy Writ where this doctrine is most clearly taught, are, the Epistle to the Romans, 3d, 4th, and 5th chapters, and the Epistle to the Galatians. But St Paul teaches us to trace it in *all* parts of Scripture, by the following declaration,—'But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, *being witnessed by the law and the prophets*.'[4] Let us, therefore, briefly examine the truth of this declaration, before we study St Paul's own comment upon it, and inquire how the Righteousness of God was witnessed by the Law. The term '*law*,' as used in the apostolic writings, signifies sometimes the *moral* law, sometimes the *ceremonial* law, sometimes *the whole legal dispensa-*

[1] Gal. iii. 8.
[2] Is. liii. 11.
[3] James ii. 24.
[4] Rom. iii. 21.

tion, and at other times *the Scriptures generally*. But in whichever of these senses we take the word 'law,' in this assertion of St Paul, it will be found equally true, that '*the righteousness of God is witnessed by the law*,' as the only hope of sinners. The strictness of the *moral* law, and the awful curses it denounced upon every transgression, combined with the promises of mercy made to man, implied that a perfect righteousness was to be wrought for him. The shadows of the *ceremonial* law prefigured the same truth. It was witnessed to, by the privileges of the chosen people, and by the faith of believers, during the *legal dispensation;* and it may be traced throughout the *Old Testament*, when rightly understood. The Righteousness of God had also been distinctly witnessed by the *Prophets*. Moses, while extolling the pardoning mercy and grace of the Lord God, added this clause, 'And that will by no means clear the guilty;'[1] that is, without a due satisfaction for their guilt. David, though at times he seemed to appeal to his own innocence and righteousness, proved that he did so only in arrest of man's unjust accusations, by the humble confessions he made, at other times, of the total unworthiness and unrighteousness of every man, in the sight of God; and by his resolution to make mention of God's Righteousness, and of His only.[2] Solomon witnessed, 'There is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good and sinneth not.'[3] Isaiah sang, 'In the Lord have I righteousness and strength.' 'In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory.'[4] Jeremiah announced the coming of Messiah, by the name of JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.[5] Habakkuk declared, 'The just shall live by his faith;'[6] and Daniel

[1] Exod. xxxiv. 7. [2] Ps. cxliii. 2; lxxi. 16. [3] Eccles. vii. 20.
[4] Is. xlv. 24, 25. [5] Jer. xxiii. 6. [6] Hab. ii. 4.

gave the joyful intimation, that Messiah should 'bring in everlasting righteousness,' as well as 'make an end of sin.'[1]

Let us now, with all simplicity, learn the doctrine of Justification, as taught by St Paul, in the third chapter of Romans. Having, in the foregoing chapters, and in the first part of this one, 'proved both Jews and Gentiles that they are all under sin;' having brought in a verdict of 'guilty before God,' against the whole world; he distinctly states in what way men cannot be justified, and in what way they can be perfectly justified. After casting aside all deeds of man, as utterly incapable of justifying him, how beautifully and powerfully does the apostle bring forward the only Righteousness which can avail him; 'But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'[2]

The only Righteousness which God could accept on behalf of man, was a *perfect* and *meritorious obedience*, and a *perfect* and *meritorious sacrifice*. This obedience and this sacrifice could never have been offered by a creature, however exalted; but by the voluntary submission of the eternal Son to the yoke and the penalty of his Father's law, a Righteousness was wrought out, sufficient for the pardon and Justification of the whole of our fallen race. This Righteousness is imputed to or placed to the account of believers, as if performed by themselves; and put upon them, as a robe to cover all

[1] Dan. ix. 24. [2] Rom. iii. 21-24.

their own unrighteousness. All men equally need a free justification, and must receive it on the same terms; for whatever difference may appear in the degrees of guilt, between one sinner and another, this difference diminishes greatly, when we take into account their respective circumstances and temptations; and it absolutely dwindles to nothing, when both are compared with the Law, which demands perfect and perpetual obedience, and with the Example of obedience, set before us in the character of Christ. As 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;' and as the least shortcoming destroys all claim to justification in ourselves; there is positively 'no difference,' as to the manner of obtaining justifying righteousness, between the holiest saint and the vilest sinner. All must be justified '*freely, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*'

From stating the *way* of justification, St Paul proceeds to give an *example* of it, in the patriarch Abraham.[1] Abraham was honoured with such intimate fellowship with Jehovah, as to be called 'The Friend of God;' his obedience to God's commands was so remarkable, as to render him a pattern to believers, in every succeeding age. He was the progenitor of the Messiah, and the father of all them that believe, whether of the circumcision or the uncircumcision. Yet neither his exalted privileges nor his exemplary obedience could, in any measure, justify Abraham. 'He hath whereof to glory, but not before God. For what saith the Scripture? Abraham *believed* God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.'[2]

For another example of justification by faith alone, we may take the case of St Paul himself, as described in the third chapter of Philippians; and the ground of his jus-

[1] Rom. iv. [2] Rom. iv. 2, 3.

tification will be found substantially the same as the ground of Abraham's justification. He discards and renounces, not only his works before conversion, performed as they were under a mistaken, but sincere zeal for God; but, to borrow the words of Scott, 'After many years 'spent in preaching the Gospel, with apostolical authori-'ty, abundant miraculous gifts, immense labours, extraor-'dinary success, unparalleled sufferings, and most exalt-'ed holiness; he decidedly counted all these things to 'be loss, in comparison of the most excellent knowledge 'of Christ; and his great desire was to be found in 'Christ, to stand before God, not having as his plea or 'title to life, his own righteousness, which, having the 'law of God as its measure, could only condemn him; '"*but that which is through the faith of Christ, the 'righteousness which is of God by faith;*" even that 'righteousness which God imputes to the believing sin-'ner; namely, the perfect obedience unto death of his 'Incarnate Son, which alone can answer the demands of 'the law, and render a transgressor's salvation consistent 'with the perfect justice of God.'

Since, then, neither Abraham nor Paul were justified by their works, how vain must be the attempt of any other human being to justify himself! Indeed, were it not for the perversion of intellect, which sin has introduced, man could never have formed so preposterous an idea, as that a criminal could be acquitted and rewarded, by a law which he has broken in time past, and which he must continue to break in time to come. The idea can arise only from gross ignorance of the guilt of the criminal, of the strictness of the law, and of the inflexible justice of the Lawgiver.

But, before quitting the subject of Abraham's righteousness, we must notice the apparently opposite conclu-

sion drawn by St James, to that of St Paul, as given above. He says, 'Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?—Ye see then how that *by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.*'[1] At first sight, nothing can appear more contradictory than the statements of the two apostles, on this subject. Yet the contradiction is only apparent. St Paul shows that faith alone interests a sinner in the mercy of God, through the redemption and righteousness of Christ, for justification; and he constantly affirms the constraining efficacy of this living faith, to produce love and all good works. St James shows that no faith can justify a man which is not productive of good works. In short, St Paul addressed those who *opposed* the doctrine of justification by faith; St James addressed those who *perverted* it. Indeed, this view is necessary, to render the words of James consistent with each other; for, in a verse which intervenes, he says, 'And the Scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham *believed* God, *and it was imputed unto him for righteousness.*'[2]

Enough has now been said, we think, to prove that the Lord Jesus Christ is '*of God made unto us righteousness;*'[3] and that he is '*the End of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth;*'[4] it being the *end* and design of every kind of *law* that God has given, to lead men to Christ, that they might be justified by faith.

But this doctrine is proved still more gloriously, in the title, JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,[5] assumed by our blessed Mediator. This title belongs to him in a double sense; his obedience unto death is the *justifying*

[1] James ii. 21–24. [2] James ii. 23. [3] 1 Cor. i. 30.
[4] Rom. x. 4. [5] Jer. xxiii. 6.

Righteousness of his people, and their *title* to everlasting bliss; and it is by union with him, and by the influences of his Spirit, that they have any *personal* righteousness, holiness, and meetness for heaven. Does not this title bear in itself a direct refutation of the strange doctrine we have heard asserted, 'That, in the work of Redemption, Jesus laid aside his Deity, and that his holy obedience was no more than a perfectly sanctified *human* obedience?' We ask, How could Christ be 'JEHOVAH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS,' unless the Righteousness which he performed, in our nature, and for our benefit, was performed by him *as God*, as well as Man? So entirely does his Righteousness, as Mediator, belong to the Church, that she herself is styled, 'The Lord our Righteousness.'[1]

What solid satisfaction, what well-grounded confidence, and strong consolation, are found in this blessed Title! We are not required to work out a righteousness for ourselves; we need not make the impracticable attempt; for here is a Righteousness freely offered to our acceptance, by Him who cannot lie; a Righteousness of infinite worth, in which Omniscience itself can discover no flaw, for it is divine.

Our extreme *need* of such a righteousness is fully attested by its being provided for us. For God does nothing without an adequate cause; and, 'if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.'[2] Since, then, God has in such an awful and astonishing manner provided a divine Righteousness for us, by making his beloved Son 'to be sin for us,'[3] we may be assured that righteousness can be obtained in no other way, than by faith in him.

How melancholy is it, to behold multitudes of sinners

[1] Jer. xxxiii. 16. [2] Gal. ii. 21. [3] 2 Cor. v. 21.

rejecting pardon and justification, in the only way they can be obtained; and, ignorant of God's Righteousness, going about to establish their own righteousness,[1] either in whole, or, which is as fatally ruinous, in part. We must choose one mode of justification, or the other; they are quite incompatible with each other; for if, in any degree, we desire to be justified by the law, 'Christ is become of no effect to us.'[2]

If none could be saved, however, who did not wholly and perfectly renounce their own righteousness, the number of the saved would, it is feared, be but small. The sin of self-righteousness is so extremely subtle, that if any one think he is free from it, he cannot have a stronger proof of self-ignorance; for it is the confession of the most advanced believers, that no sin cleaves so fast to them, or returns so perpetually to torment them, as this one. It defiles every thing they do; turning even their humility and self-renunciation into pride and self-complacency; weakening their gratitude for unmerited mercy, and rendering their best works sinful and hell-deserving.

How carefully, then, should we watch against this insidious foe; how earnestly should we entreat the Lord to expel it from our hearts, by any means he may see needful; to strip us of every vain, boasting plea, and enable us to glory in Himself alone; to put into our lips and hearts the joyful song of the Prophet, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom deeketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.'[3]

It is a great encouragement to prayer for justifying grace, to know that he who is 'THE LORD OUR RIGHTE-

[1] Rom. x. 3, 4. [2] Gal. v. 4. [3] Is. lxi. 10.

OUSNESS,' is also 'THE AUTHOR AND FINISHER OF OUR FAITH;' of that *faith* whereby we become interested in his *Righteousness;* and to know that he has promised to give his Holy Spirit to convince us of sin, and also of righteousness.

The Righteousness of Christ is 'the white stone'[1] of acquittal, which he will give to each of his true followers, in the great day of account; and which he gives them, by anticipation, even here. Their own 'new name' is inscribed upon it; and, though not always legible to themselves, it is clearly read when the Holy Spirit illumines his own work in their souls. This Righteousness is 'the white robe'[2] which covers the shame of all their transgressions, original and personal; the fine linen, clean and white, arrayed in which, the saints shall be called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. For whom God hath justified, them will he also glorify. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth?'[3]

[1] Rev. ii. 17. [2] Rev. vii. 9, 13, 14.
[3] Rom. viii. 30, 33, 34.

ESSAY XXX.

OUR PEACE—PRINCE OF PEACE—SHILOH.

One of the most blessed fruits of justification by faith is Peace; as the Apostle joyfully declares, 'Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'[1]

'The word Peace is used in Scripture in various different ways, as, 1st, There is peace with God by satisfaction for sins committed against him; this is done by the sufferings and merit of Christ; 2d, There is peace with ourselves, or in our own consciences; this arises from a sense of our reconciliation to God; it is the gift of Christ, and wrought in us by his Spirit; 3d, There is submission to the will of God;'[2] for peace between an absolute sovereign and his poor dependant subjects, must consist greatly, on their part, in willing submission.

Now, in the first and in the third sense of the term, peace is the *immediate* effect of justification, but not always so in the second. As soon as a sinner is pardoned and justified, the cause of controversy between him and his God being removed, he is made partaker of the reconciliation wrought by Christ, and received into a state of favour and friendship with his offended Sovereign. A great change is, at the same time, wrought in

[1] Rom. v. 1. [2] Cruden.

the sinner's mind and dispositions. He now desires to lay down all the weapons of rebellion, and live in perfect allegiance to his reconciled God; and nothing grieves him so much as the remaining enmity of his corrupt nature to the will of his heavenly Father. But a man may be at peace with God in both these senses, he may have the *peace of reconciliation*, and the *peace of submission;* and yet, through remaining darkness, legality, or weakness of faith, he may not enjoy *peace of conscience*, or a sense of his acceptance and reconciliation. He may have an interest in the *work* of righteousness, which is peace, and yet not enjoy the *effect* of righteousness, which is quietness and assurance.[1]

The word peace, however, is used in other senses besides those already noticed. 'There is peace *with men*, 'either mutual concord and agreement with Christian 'brethren, or safety and deliverance from such as are 'our enemies. Peace is opposed to war. It is taken 'for the public tranquillity and quiet state of the church, 'when it is not troubled within by schisms and heresies, 'or without by persecuting tyrants. The apostle Paul, 'in the titles of his Epistles, generally wishes for *grace* 'and *peace* to the faithful to whom he writes. This is 'both a Christian salutation, and an apostolical, minis-'terial benediction; that is, I wish that the free, unde-'served love and favour of God, and a lively sense there-'of in your souls, may be continued and increased to 'you, and that, as a fruit of this, you may enjoy all 'blessings, both inward and outward, especially peace of 'conscience, and a secure enjoyment of the love of God. 'Lastly, peace is put for the perfect rest, joy, and feli-'city, which the saints enjoy in heaven, where they are 'out of reach of enemies to disturb or molest them.'[2]

[1] Is. xxxii. 17. [2] Cruden.

For peace, in each and all of these senses, we are indebted to the Lord Jesus Christ. And we are now to contemplate him under titles expressive of his peace-bestowing office, viz. as 'OUR PEACE,' or 'THE LORD WHO SENDETH PEACE;' as 'SHILOH,' or 'THE PRINCE OF PEACE,' all which titles are nearly synonymous.

First, the Lord Jesus is *Our Peace*. As, from being entirely the Substance and Centre of the Covenant of Grace, he is styled 'a Covenant of the people;' so, from being the Centre and Substance of all kinds of peace, between God and men, and between man and man, he is styled Our Peace. If we understand it as *peace with God*, Jesus is Our Peace, because 'the chastisement of our peace was upon him;' because, 'when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.' And not only was our peace with God *procured* by the sufferings and obedience of his eternal Son, it is *preserved* by his continual intercession.

But we must beware of ascribing to the Father any vindictive wrath, which needed to be appeased by the atonement and intercession of the Son. The maintenance of his righteous government required that justice should be satisfied, in the very act of extending mercy to sinners. But this mercy was the free, voluntary gift of the Father as well as of the Son. '*It pleased the Father*,—having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.'[1] 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;' and continually he beseeches men to be reconciled to him.[2]

Or, if we understand Peace to mean *peace of conscience*, a comfortable repose of mind, arising from appropriation of the finished work of the Redeemer, in this sense also he is Our Peace. For joy and peace in believing must

[1] Col. i. 19, 20. [2] 2 Cor. v. 18–20.

come from him who is the Author and Finisher of our faith. 'The peace of God which passeth all understanding,' can keep our minds only 'through Christ Jesus.'[1] That peace which the Apostles prayed might be multiplied unto their Christian brethren, they supplicated from 'our Lord Jesus Christ,' in conjunction with the Father; and it is only 'by the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord,' that this peace can be enjoyed.

Again, if we understand Peace, as *submission to the will and service of God*, still it is true that Christ is Our Peace; for it is only a believing apprehension of his astonishing love in bearing our sins, that can subdue the natural enmity of our hearts to God, and melt them into grateful and affectionate submission. Believing that we have been bought at such a price, we are changed from rebels into humble and obedient subjects; and the language of our hearts becomes, 'Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?'

Christ is also the Centre and Substance of *Peace between men and men*, whether individuals or nations, and however inimical they may previously have been to each other. In the second chapter of St Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, he teaches them, that they the Gentile converts, and himself and his countrymen the Jews, who had hitherto been so widely separated, were '*made nigh* by the blood of Christ.' 'For he is our Peace who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the

[1] Philip. iv. 7.

enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.'[1] In this passage we learn, that Christ, by *fulfilling*, *abolished* the ordinances of the Jewish ritual, which opposed so strong a barrier to the union of Jews and Gentiles; and forming them into one harmonious and peaceful church, reconciles them all to each other, and to God; having, by his cross, slain the enmity that existed between Jews and Gentiles, and between both of them and God.

Further, we may remark, that Christ is Our Peace, *as he defends the Church from all outward enemies.* These enemies are all included under the term *Assyrian* in Micah v. 5. 'And this man shall be the Peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land.'

Lastly, our blessed Lord is the Centre and Substance of that unalloyed and perfect Peace which the saints enjoy *in heaven;* for it is only in consequence of the reconciliation accomplished by him, that God can dwell with any of the human race as their God, and they with him as his people, in delightful fellowship. 'There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest.'

The titles 'PRINCE OF PEACE,' and 'SHILOH,' may be considered as of nearly similar signification; both expressing the royal dignity, authority, and dominion, possessed by Christ as Mediator, and exercised by him in bestowing peace, happiness, and prosperity upon his people, individually and collectively;—as a Sovereign, who bestows peace, in all the senses above mentioned.

The name 'Prince of Peace' occurs only once in Scripture, forming one of that glorious catalogue in Isaiah ix. 6, where the reign of Messiah is described as an *endless increase of peace.* In various parts of Isaiah's prophecy,

[1] Eph. ii. 13–17.

and of the other prophetical writings, this blessed feature of Messiah's reign is predicted; some of these predictions have been already quoted, when viewing Solomon, *the Peaceable*, as a type of Christ. Amid the turmoils, wars, and strifes of present times, how refreshing is it to know, that there is a time coming, even on this earth, when men 'shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.'[1] But this cannot be realized until the kingdom of Christ is fully established in the world.

The name 'Shiloh' also occurs but once in Scripture, viz. in the dying predictions of Israel, regarding his posterity: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.'[2] 'The 'meaning of the name seems to be, *Saviour*, or *happy*, 'blessed, *peaceable*, or a *Peace-Maker*, from the root *Sha-* 'lah, he was *quiet*, and in *peace*, he was *safe and happy*.'[3]

A passage in the prophecy of Ezekiel throws light upon that in Gen. xlix. 10, and much resembles it; evidently referring to Shiloh, although not by name, 'Thus saith the Lord, I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, until *He* come, *whose right it is;* and I will give it him.'[4] The following remarks of Scott will open this title, and the text where it occurs, better than any illustration we can ourselves offer.

'The word rendered *sceptre* properly signifies a *rod* or 'staff, and simply denotes the exercise of dominion or 'authority, of which the *rod* or *sceptre* was the badge. 'This authority, in Judah, however assailed, or changed 'as to external form, should not finally depart, till *Shiloh* 'came, on whom the legislative and judicial authority

[1] Is. ii. 4. [2] Gen. xlix. 10. [3] Cruden. [4] Ezek. xxi. 27.

'would devolve,—the authority would remain with Ju-
'dah, till *He came whose right it was*, and with him it
'should henceforth remain for ever. As to the time of
'his coming, it is foretold clearly, that it should be
'before the *sceptre* and *lawgiver* should depart from Ju-
'dah, or about that time. We have seen how the seeptre
'and the authority remained with Judah, till the cap-
'tivity.—Even in Babylon, the Jews seem to have been
'under some internal government, exercised by the family
'of David. After their return from Babylon, Zernbbabel,
'of David's race, was their leader; and the tribe of Judah,
'and those who were incorporated with them, had regu-
'lar magistrates and rulers among themselves, under the
'kings of Persia and Syria, and afterwards under the
'Romans. The Sanhedrim, constituted in great mea-
'sure of the tribe of Judah, and the other courts depen-
'dant on it, possessed great authority till the coming of
'Christ, according to the concurrent testimony of ancient
'writers. The tribe of Judah likewise was preserved
'distinct, and could traee back its genealogies without
'difficulty. In all respects, the *sceptre*, though gradually
'enfeebled, did not *depart*, nor was the exercise of legis-
'lative and judicial authority, though interrupted, finally
'suspended till after that event.—The word *Shiloh* may
'mean, *He who is sent*, or, *the Seed*, or, *the Peaceable*, or
'*the Prosperous One;* but all will allow that the Messiah
'was intended, who was *sent* into the world, as the pro-
'mised *Seed*, to be *the Prince of Peace*. Till his coming,
'Judah possessed considerable authority: but shortly
'after his crucifixion, this authority was vastly abridged;
'and within that generation, according to his express
'prediction, Jerusalem was destroyed, the whole civil and
'ecclesiastical state was subverted, and all distinctions,
'among the poor harrassed remnant, were eonfounded;

'they were scattered over the face of the earth; and to 'this day, after almost 1800 years, they have been more 'destitute of *sceptre* and *lawgiver*, than even during the 'Babylonish captivity. The inspired Patriarch added, '"*To him shall the gathering of the people be.*" If we 'understand this of Judah, its exact accomplishment has 'already been shown.—But the clause seems more im-'mediately to refer to *Shiloh*. After his coming, when 'the sceptre departed from Judah, the gathering both of 'Jews and Gentiles was to him, as their Prince and Sa-'viour. It has continued to be so even to this present 'time; and we are taught to expect that this will be 'the case, more and more, till *the earth shall be filled with 'his glory;* and that the very Jews, now without prince 'or sceptre, will ere long be gathered to him, as his willing 'people. But, "*When the Son of Man shall come in 'his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall 'he sit on the throne of his glory, and before him shall 'be gathered all nations.*" And finally, the unnum-'bered millions of the redeemed shall be gathered to him 'into his heavenly kingdom, to behold his glory, and to 'rejoice in his love for ever.'[1]

With what deep reverence, combined with ardent affection, should we regard our adorable Prince of Peace! invested as he is with universal dominion, and exercising all this dominion to promote the happiness and prosperity of his people. This view of the Saviour suggests important lessons, both in respect of *duty* and of *privilege;* the duty of following his example in promoting peace; and the privilege of enjoying that peace which he gives.

First, as regards the *duty* of peace,—Jesus exhorted his disciples to have peace one with another;[2] and pro-

[1] Scott on Gen. xlix. 10. [2] Mark ix. 50.

nounced a precious benediction on peace-makers, 'Blessed are the peace-makers; for they shall be called the children of God.'[1] It is the bounden duty of Christians to live in peace with each other, and to promote peace among all men: and it is a cause of deep humiliation to the Church, that among her members, there should be so little of the spirit of the Prince of Peace: that in families, in communities, and in nations, the religion of the gospel has been made the ground of bitter animosity, fierce strife, and frightful bloodshed; each side using alike the weapons of destruction, and contending with obstinacy proportioned to the smallness of the point in dispute.

But the word *Peace*, like the word *Charity*, is much abused and perverted. A great deal that is applauded, as promoting *peace*, is nothing else than careless indifference to the honour of Christ, and the good of souls: and many are accused of being inconsistent followers of the Prince of Peace, because they boldly defend the cause of God against its enemies, and faithfully warn the wicked of their doom. We must remember, that genuine *peace* is inseparable from *truth;* according to the exhortation of the Prophet, 'Speak ye every man the truth to his neighbour; execute the judgment of *truth and peace* in your gates:—*love the truth and peace.*'[2] This implies, that truth is not to be sacrificed to peace; and the same lesson was taught by our Lord's own example. He did not decline controversy, when the cause of truth demanded it; nay, he frequently sought it. And he expressly predicted divisions, as the inevitable consequence of a partial reception of his religion. 'Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against

[1] Matt. v. 9. [2] Zech. viii. 16–19.

three, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.'[1] This, indeed, is the very opposite from the genuine tendeney of the gospel, which is 'to make men of one mind in an house.' But owing to the enmity between the 'Seed of the woman,' and the seed of the devil, divisions and disagreements necessarily occur, when the followers of Jesus walk consistently among those who neither know nor love him. This is implied, in the double limitation, attached by St Paul, to the precept, 'Live peaceably with all men:' he says, '*If it be possible,—as much as lieth in you*, live peaceably with all men.' In general, however, we have more need to study the rule than the exception; and whichever we know to be our weak side, whether a love of contention, or a too great pliability, here we must keep the strictest watch.

If peace be little understood and little practised as a *duty*, we suspect it is still less understood, and still less enjoyed, as a *privilege*. A double perversion prevails on the subject. Although God has promised that 'Peace shall be upon Israel;'[2] yea, that 'great shall be the peace of his children;'[3] and though he has declared, 'There is no peace to the wicked;'[4] still, many of God's own children have little enjoyment of peace; they know not the thoughts that God is thinking towards them, thoughts of peace, and not of evil;[5] while, on the other hand, thousands are saying to themselves, 'Peace, peace,' to whom there is 'no peace.'[6] The latter mistake is the more common and the more dangerous of the two. It is that fatal security in which Satan lulls his wretched captives; keeping them ignorant of their own guilt, of the infinite evil of sin, and of God's terrible vengeance.

[1] Luke xii. 51–53; Matt. x. 34–36. [2] Ps. cxxv. 5.
[3] Isaiah liv. 13. [4] Isaiah xlviii. 22. [5] Jer. xxix. 11.
[6] Jer. viii. 11.

Having never been troubled, they fancy themselves at peace; and even go down to the grave in their fatal dream of peace, having no 'bands in their death.' Better, far better is it, 'to go mourning all the day long,' under the burden of sin, if at length our mourning shall be turned to joy, than to repose in this false, deceitful calm. At the same time, it is much to be regretted, that true believers often live so far below their privileges; and, by remaining unbelief, indolence, and careless walking, deprive themselves, in a great measure, of this precious legacy of their Lord, cloud the brightness of God's glory in their souls, and lessen their influence with others.

These two errors, with regard to the enjoyment of peace, are generally acknowledged. But there is a third, which it is also very necessary to guard against, and the more so, because it is less suspected. It is well known that many *ungodly* men possess a *false* peace; and that many *pious* men have little *true* peace. But alas! we must confess, that it is possible for the *renewed* and *converted* to indulge in *false* peace. Their *original* security has indeed been broken up; they cannot now trust to their comparative innocence, nor to the mitigated rigour of God's law, and the vague notions of mercy, which formerly stilled the agitations of conscience. But too often they fall into a *second* security, which, though not equally fatal with the first, is yet extremely hurtful to the soul, and approaches awfully near to practical antinomianism:—a sort of quiet serenity pervades the mind, which had its rise at first in the lively hope of mercy through Christ; but, by the languor of faith, by forgetfulness of sins, by time, and worldly business, has degenerated into a stupid, easy complacency in present attainments. We feel that we are *safe*, because we are believers; our conscience becomes blunted, so as not to require the healing Balm of

Gilead; and alas! this serenity is not easily disturbed even by conscious guilt. A two-fold evil arises from this state,—no *true* peace is enjoyed; none of that lively gratitude and joy which springs from a sense of pardoning love; and no barrier is raised against future temptations; because our guilt is done away, not by application of the blood of sprinkling, but by forgetfulness.*

Since, then, so many dangerous errors surround this blessed gift of Peace, how thankful should we be that the office of bestowing it belongs to Jesus! that it belongs to him, both to break up false peace by the convincing influences of his Spirit, and to give true peace, in his character of Shiloh, the *sent* of the Father, sent to give peace and prosperity to Israel. Let us then wait upon him humbly and diligently, that we may receive 'abundance of peace.' Here is no danger of excess. When Christ 'speaks peace' to his people, and to his saints, it does not encourage them to 'turn again to folly;'[1] it forms the best preservative of their holiness, especially when they reflect at what a price this peace was obtained.

Lastly, if we know any thing of the peace of Christ ourselves, we shall be anxious to diffuse it among all who are within our sphere of influence: above all, we shall desire the peace of the Church; we shall continually pray for Jerusalem, that 'peace may be within her walls, and prosperity within her palaces;' and for all that are new creatures, in Christ Jesus, that 'peace may be upon them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.'

* See some excellent reflections, in the Memoir of the Rev. Thomas Charles of Bala.

[1] Ps. lxxxv. 8.

ESSAY XXXI.

THE WAY—THE DOOR.

One of the first blessings flowing from a state of peace and reconciliation with God, is LIBERTY OF ACCESS to him. 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have *access* by faith into this grace wherein we stand.'[1] Those to whom Christ preaches peace, have, through him, '*access* by one Spirit unto the Father.'[2]

The word translated *access* is used only in the two passages above quoted, and signifies '*introduction*, as any 'one is introduced into the presence of a prince, by some 'person of superior distinction, or one appointed for that 'purpose.'[3] And surely no word could better express the way in which sinners are admitted to the presence and favour of their offended God, through the interposition of his co-equal Son, who is fitted for the office, both by original dignity, and by the express appointment of the Father.

Two figurative Titles have been assumed by Christ himself, to describe this his gracious office of bringing and admitting sinners to God; viz. THE WAY and THE DOOR. These titles are so simple, and the parts of Scripture where they occur explain them so fully, that no lengthened illustration will be necessary; especially as

[1] Rom. v. 1, 2. [2] Ephes. ii. 14–18. [3] Scott.

the office they denote bears a close affinity to that of Mediator, already illustrated. We shall therefore simply notice the passages in the order in which they stand; and then offer a few practical remarks.

The only place where we find the term Door, as an emblem of the Saviour, is in John x. 1-9, where Jesus employs it to teach us, that by Him alone every pastor must enter the fold, before he can teach others to enter: and that by the same Door every sinner must pass, who would obtain access to God's favour and to his Throne of Grace here, and to his glory hereafter;—nay, that by this same Door, viz. his own meritorious obedience and sacrifice, he himself, as Man and Mediator, and as the Shepherd of the sheep, would enter the true fold above.

The other figurative term, The Way,[1] is also recorded but once as used by our blessed Lord; but his whole life and conversation testified, that the great purpose of his manifestation in the flesh was to *lead* men back to their heavenly Father, from whom they have so widely strayed; and that *in no other way* can any one return. 'I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.'

'Jesus Christ is called The Way, because it is by him 'alone that believers obtain eternal life, and an entrance 'into heaven. He is the Way to heaven, by the doc- 'trines which he taught; by his death, which pur- 'chased this heavenly inheritance for the elect; by his 'holy life and conversation, setting us an example, that 'we should follow his steps; and, by the influences of 'his Spirit, whereby believers are sanctified, and made 'meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in 'light.'[2]

That which, in the Gospels, is styled the Door and

[1] John xiv. 6. [2] Cruden.

the Way is, in the Epistles, termed *access*. The texts to which we shall turn, for explanation of this Way of access are, Rom. v. 2; Eph. ii. 18, and iii. 12; Heb. iv. 16, and x. 19–22. These passages mutually elucidate one another; and together form a complete description of the nature and purpose of this office of Jesus.

In the first of these passages, Rom. v. 2, is stated *the mode whereby we obtain access*, viz. *by faith;* and believers are represented as having entered into a state of *grace*, or full favour and friendship with God, and as having such a sweet persuasion that this is their state, as assures them of admittance into his glorious presence hereafter.

In Eph. ii. 18, and the following verses, the *power by which we avail ourselves of this Way of access* is added, viz. *by the Spirit*. 'Through him (that is Christ), we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.' And the glorious privileges of which, in consequence of this access, we partake, are further stated. We are brought into the family and household of God, and are made 'an habitation of God, through the Spirit.'

In Eph. iii. 12, are pointed out the *dispositions wherewith we should come to God, through Christ*, viz. '*with boldness and confidence.*' In Heb. iv. 16, *the blessings for which we are to come*, viz. *mercy*, *grace*, which terms comprehend all that sinners can want.

Lastly, in Heb. x. 19–22, all the substance of the preceding passages is concentrated, and the whole employed to inculcate the most practical and encouraging lessons. We are told the *place* into which we are invited to enter, —'into the holiest,' into the closest fellowship with the holy God attainable in this mortal life, and into the true sanctuary above, where his holy Majesty is fully displayed. We are next told the *Way* through which we

may enter,—' by the blood of Jesus,' or ' through his flesh ;' through the rending of that vail of human flesh which concealed, in part, his Divine Majesty, and which must be rent, ere he could, as our Surety, enter into the holiest himself, or open the way for us to enter in. This Way is called *new* and *living*. It is *new*, in opposition to the original way of access, by personal righteousness, which the entrance of sin has for ever closed; and new, compared with the entrance which the Jewish High Priest made once a-year, which itself proved ' that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest.' It is *living*, because it not only leads to life eternal, but is itself possessed of life-giving energy. For this Way is none other than the Lord Jesus, who, by his death, opened the Way, and, by his continual intercession, keeps it open. Having described the Way opened for us, the apostle proceeds to teach us *how we should make use of it*, exhorting us to come ' with boldness,' ' with a true heart, and with full assurance of faith.' They to whom such a Way of access is made known ought not to stand at a distance from God, as if afraid or unwilling to approach him ; but, in spite of all their unworthiness, shame, and guilt, to expect a gracious reception, as often as they come in simple dependance on the blood of Jesus. Looking to the free grace, the rich promises, and the glorious perfections of God in Christ, they should come with enlarged and confident expectations of the success of their petitions. All who would enjoy such blessed communion with God must, however, be careful to avoid every thing approaching to hypocrisy. They must have their ' hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience,' by continual application of the blood of the Lamb, and by putting away every known or indulged sin, and they must have their outward conduct

purified by that cleansing of the Spirit, of which the water used in baptism is a sign.

We have now illustrated this subject as much as, by its simplicity, it seems to require. But the main point is, What practical use do we make of it? Have we, in sincerity, renounced every way of approach to God, except through his beloved Son, and gratefully availed ourselves of this Way? How utterly vain and hopeless must be the attempt to force our way into the presence of Jehovah, by paths which he has peremptorily closed! What can we look for but death, as the reward of our rash presumption? Are we then willing to enter by Christ, the Door, although this be 'a strait gate,'[1] too strait to admit our pride, our self-righteousness, or any thing we can call our own? Do we desire to pass through the Pilgrim's wicket-gate, though it conduct us out of the broad road into the narrow Way, '*the Way of holiness?*'[2]

If so, let us thank Him who has made us willing, and rejoice in his precious promise, that 'the way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.'[3] But, alas! we, who know and acknowledge the excellence and pleasantness of this Way, have cause to bewail our misimprovement of it. There is, perhaps, no one subject more humbling to Christians, than that such a Way of access to God being opened to them, by means so astonishing, by agency so divine, and knowing as they do, their constant need of supplies received in this Way, they yet make such lamentably deficient use of it.

If we heard that a powerful and benignant prince had issued a proclamation to all his subjects, inviting them to come into his presence, in a particular way, prescribed in

[1] Mat. vii. 14. [2] Is. xxxv. 8. [3] Is. xxxv. 8.

the proclamation, promising not only to pardon and overlook all past offences, but to bestow on each supplicant the most endearing tokens of personal regard, as well as the richest gifts, exceeding their largest desires; gifts exactly suited to the exigencies of each; and, if we knew, beyond a doubt, that all the subjects of this prince had incurred his severest displeasure, and were in a state of utter destitution, from which none but he could rescue them;—if we knew all this, and yet saw that a great proportion of those subjects refused to come to their gracious king at all; that many of them obstinately persisted in attempting to come by ways that he had forbidden; and that, even the small portion who did come in the right way, came but seldom, and then expected but little;—must we not be forced to conclude, that these poor, destitute creatures were under some unhappy delusion, which blinded them to their own state, to the character of their sovereign, and to the nature of the way appointed by him for their approach?

On examining the case of these people more closely, we might discover that several causes combined to occasion their delusion; that, in the first place, they laboured under a hereditary disease, which affected their intellect and enervated their constitution;—that, in addition to this natural disease, they breathed a deleterious atmosphere, a kind of malaria, which either weighed them down in listless languor, or buoyed them up in feverish excitement; the former leading them to despair of the king's mercy, the latter persuading them that they did not stand in absolute need of it. We might further discover, that a malicious foreign enemy was perpetually on the alert, to prevent these poor people from setting out in their way to the king's court, raising false reports against his character and government,

and representing the journey sometimes as needless, sometimes as impossible;—and, when any of them did set out, rendering their journey as hard and painful as he could. These causes we might perceive operating with uncontrolled sway upon the larger part of the community; and, though resisted by the few faithful subjects, yet operating greatly to their injury also.

This is no exaggerated representation, but one which falls immensely short of the truth. The great mass of mankind are content to live without God in the world. A numerous class endeavour to approach him by outward observances, and self-righteous formalities; and believers themselves shamefully undervalue and neglect their inestimable privilege of access to the Majesty of Heaven, through Christ, the living Way. Our Sovereign maintains no haughty reserve, not even that formal distance, necessary to the dignity of earthly potentates. He invites all his subjects to come before him at stated times, in large bodies, to present their united supplications. But, even at these times, each may put into the King's hand his own individual petitions, as well as join in the general addresses. And, at all times, and in all circumstances, the meanest of his subjects may obtain a private audience, sure of his requests being granted, as far as is consistent with his real welfare, provided only he come in the right Way. Yet, knowing all this, how little are our prayers characterized by holy boldness and cheerful expectation! How little heart-felt dependance have we upon the *introduction* provided for us. Did God deal with us as we deserve, he would shut up that Way which we so ungratefully slight; but, Blessed be his name, Jesus 'ever liveth to make intercession for us;' therefore the Way is still kept open; and, vile and unworthy though we be, we may still come with boldness

to the Throne of Grace, as often as we come in the name of Jesus.

But not in the act of prayer only, are the people of God privileged to hold communion with him. They may have fellowship with him, at all times, and in all their occupations, through the blood and intercession of Immanuel.

Believers under the old dispensation came to God in this Way, by anticipation of the efficacy of the atonement. Enoch walked with God; Abraham was called the Friend of God; and Moses saw him face to face. Under the new dispensation, promises of exalted communion with God are given in clearer terms, and of more general application, than were given in the old. But alas! in this respect most Christians live sadly below their privileges. They do not, like David, 'follow hard' after the Lord, but are satisfied with vague, indistinct tokens of his gracious presence; being often at a loss to know whether the light of his countenance be lifted up upon them or not; and yet not mourning over their darkness and distance. This is a branch of the *false peace* we lamented in the last Essay, and it is as detrimental to the enjoyment of God's presence, as false peace is to true. It is a sad evidence of the coldness of our love, of the grovelling tendency of our minds, and our low apprehensions of the honour and happiness of a close walk with God.

Finally, if we hope to meet our God with comfort, in the hour of death, and at the day of judgment; if we desire, when quitting this mortal body, to possess a lively hope of admission into the heavenly sanctuary, by the blood of Jesus, let us be continually coming to God now by Christ, the Door and the Way.

ESSAY XXXII.

FOUNDATION.—CORNER-STONE.

An attentive study of the varied offices of Jesus cannot fail to impress the mind with a sense of the completeness of that salvation which he came to accomplish, with the beautiful harmony of its several parts, and their perfect adaptation to the wants of returning sinners. In proof of this remark, let us suppose a man who has received the Saviour in all the characters lately presented to our notice,—as his *Righteousness*, his *Peace*, and his *Way*,—who has just begun to taste the joy of putting on Christ's Righteousness, instead of vainly trying to work out a righteousness for himself; of exchanging false for true Peace, and the cold distance of his unrenewed state for 'Access with confidence by the faith of Jesus;' let us suppose this man permitted to choose under what character his Almighty Friend should next appear, so as best to meet his wants, and he could not, we think, *invent* a character more adapted to those wants than the one now before us, viz. a Foundation, a ground of confidence, something whereon he can safely *rest*, as a building rests securely on its foundation.

This is the very thing the man wants, something to give stability to his newly-acquired privileges, something to assure him that his new joys, hopes, and comforts, rest on a sure and permanent basis. For, the more

highly he values these privileges, the more fearful is he of losing them; and knowing now, in a measure, his own weakness, the wavering of his faith, and the inconstancy of his best affections, he eagerly looks out for some ground of hope beyond himself, for some foundation of happiness and peace, eternal as his soul, and unchangeable as his soul is inconstant.

With what delight, then, will he discover, that the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, reveal Jesus Christ in that very character which his necessities require,—as the Foundation of the whole Church, and of every member of it; as that Foundation upon which he is invited by prophets, by Apostles, and by the Lord Jesus himself, to build his every hope for time and for eternity.

The passages of Scripture to which this title leads us are simple, and mutually illustrative. In Isaiah xxviii. is a description of this STONE, every word of which speaks rest and comfort to the trembling believer.[1] They are the words of *the Lord God;* he calls our attention to them as to words of the highest importance, saying, *Behold!* He declares, that the Foundation is to be laid by his own hand, 'Behold, *I* lay;' that it is to be laid *in Zion* for the foundation of the whole Church; that it is to be a *tried* Stone, chosen with perfect assurance of its sufficiency, as men choose things best after trying them; and actually to be tried by the powers of earth and hell, and even by God himself, and proved all-sufficient. This Stone is further styled by the Lord God A CORNER-STONE, that which forms the angle of a building, and unites its different sides, whether at the foundation, or at the top of the wall. He styles it *a precious Corner-Stone*, precious in his own eyes on ac-

[1] Is. xxviii. 16.

count of its excellency, rareness, and beauty, and precious also in the eyes of believers. As a Foundation, the Lord God declares it *sure*, so that he who rests upon it (or believeth), shall never find cause to *hasten* from it, ashamed of his confidence; whereas, all other foundations shall be swept away as 'refuges of lies.'[1]

Under this emblem of a Stone, Messiah was revealed also to the prophets Daniel and Zechariah; and the revelations made to them concerning this Stone, contain several particulars not mentioned by Isaiah. To Daniel it appeared (or rather in the king's dream, interpreted by Daniel, it appeared) as a Stone 'cut out without hands,' which brake in pieces the kingdoms of this world, 'and became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.'[2] Here we perceive the *origin* of the kingdom of Christ; that it is not set up by human agency, but by the invisible power of God; and we perceive, also, its *gradual rise*, from small beginnings to universal empire and victory.

To Zechariah this Stone was revealed as *laid by the Lord*, as *graven* by him, and *having upon it seven eyes*.[3] *The removal of iniquity in one day* being promised in connexion with the *graving* of the Stone, seems to explain that part of the vision as descriptive of the sufferings of the Divine Redeemer; of the piercing of his hands, his feet, and his side, whereby the iniquity of his people, in all ages, was removed *in one day*. *The seven eyes upon the Stone* are supposed to denote the perfect wisdom and knowledge with which Messiah should be endued, to order all things in the Church, and watch over all its concerns. Or, the expression may mean, that the eyes of all, in heaven, in earth, and in hell, would, in one way or other, be fixed upon the precious

[1] Is. xxviii. 17. [2] Dan. ii. 34, 35. [3] Zech. iii. 9.

Corner-Stone,—those of believers, in faith, love, and hope; those of unbelievers, in contempt and abhorrence; those of evil spirits, in malignity and despair.

But, great and glorious as this Stone was declared to be by God himself,—sure as a Foundation, and precious as a Corner-Stone,—it was yet foretold by the prophets with equal clearness, that, far from meeting with the admiration and confidence to which it was entitled, it should be refused as worthless by those who professed to be builders; and that many, instead of building on it as their Foundation, would convert it, to their own destruction, into 'a Stone of Stumbling, and a Rock of Offence;'[1] that is, into an occasion of sin and ruin, at which they would take offence and stumble, so as to fall and be broken. Yet the contempt and opposition of men would not be able to overturn the unalterable decree of God. The rejection of God's chosen and precious Stone, far from hindering its advancement, would prepare the way for its exaltation to be 'the Head-Stone of the Corner,' and this by the hand of the Lord, to the admiration of all his people.[2]

One more passage will close our quotations from the Prophetical Scriptures; it is this, 'Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the LORD JEHOVAH is everlasting strength.'[3] The connexion of this text with the emblematical title now before us appears in the margin of our Bibles, where '*everlasting strength*,' is rendered 'the Rock of Ages.' Now, since Jesus is Jehovah, he is also 'the Rock of Ages,' the eternal and self-existent Basis of all strength and stability: we have, therefore, in this verse, another glorious attribute ascribed to him, as the Foundation or Rock on which the Church is built; and we are also taught *why* all his blessed qualities, as a

[1] Is. viii. 14, 15. [2] Ps. cxviii. 23. [3] Is. xxvi. 4.

Foundation, are revealed to us; it is that we may *trust* in him, as alone worthy of everlasting confidence. His Person, his Atonement, his Righteousness, and Mediation, form the only ground of confidence to sinners; and in his power and grace alone we are to trust, for the preservation and stability, the union and beauty, of the whole Church.

Let us now inquire what reference was made by our Lord himself to this his character of a Stone or Foundation, and in what manner he applied to himself the predictions above referred to. We do not find that Jesus quoted expressly the words of Isaiah xxviii. 16; but he used the emblem of a *Foundation*, when he compared the man who heard and obeyed *his words*, to a wise man who built his house upon a *Rock*, and thus rendered it proof against the fiercest rage of the elements.[1] And he used the same metaphor, when he said to Peter, 'Upon this *Rock* (viz. his own Messiahship and Sonship) I will build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'[2]

The prediction of David, in the 118th Psalm, our Lord quoted most distinctly, in connexion with his own parable of 'the wicked husbandmen;' applying it to his own rejection by the Jews, and their consequent destruction, in terms which they could not misunderstand.[3] The casting out and slaying of the Heir he showed to be parallel with the rejection of the Corner-Stone; and the miserable destruction of the husbandmen, with the ruin of those who should fall on that Stone, or on whom it should fall. This ruin, Jesus showed to be in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, chap. viii. 14, 15. And perhaps he referred also to Zech. xii. 3, and Dan. ii. 44.

[1] Mat. vii. 24, 25. [2] Mat. xvi. 18.

[3] Mat. xxi. 41–44, and Luke xx. 16–18.

After the ascension of his Master, Peter boldly declared to the Jews, that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised, was The Corner-Stone, so long expected. 'This is the Stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the Head of the Corner.'[1]

We find, in the Apostolic Epistles, frequent allusion to Christ, in this character of a Foundation or Corner-Stone. In Romans ix. 31–33, St Paul explains why his countrymen stumbled at the Stone laid in Zion. It was because they sought righteousness, 'not by faith, but by the works of the law;' and he quotes the words of Isaiah, to describe the blessed contrast, in the case of believers,—'Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.'

In 1 Cor. iii., St Paul declares *Jesus Christ* to be the Foundation, which, as a wise master-builder of the Church, he was laying, and *the only* Foundation which any man could lay. In the 2d chapter of Ephesians, after giving his Gentile converts many encouraging assurances of their cordial reception into the household of God, the apostle adds *this* substantial proof of their union with the chosen Israel, that they were all built upon One Foundation, 'Jesus Christ himself,' who was also 'the chief Corner-Stone,' uniting Jews and Gentiles in one compact and growing building. In this beautiful passage, we learn, further, the *design* of that building, of which Christ is the Foundation and Corner-Stone:—it is the most glorious that can be conceived; even to be 'an holy temple in the Lord,' 'an habitation of God through the Spirit.' As each believer individually is a temple of the Holy Ghost, so the whole body of

[1] Acts iv. 11.

believers are builded together into one magnificent Temple.

St Peter, like one who, standing on an eminence, surveys the course of a mighty river, from its rise in the dim and distant mountains to its wide development in the plain beneath his feet, presents to us, in one grand comprehensive view, all the great predictions of ancient Scripture, on this subject, and the fulfilment of those predictions in his own day. He traces the Foundation of Zion, from its having been *laid* in the eternal purpose of God to its supporting and vivifying the sacred temple built upon it, under his own eye; he traces the Corner-Stone, from its predicted rejection to its actual exaltation to be 'the Head of the Corner.' All these points he exhibits in their relative bearings; and appeals to his brethren for the truth of his delineation, for the exact fulfilment of Prophecy, in their own times; both in the stumbling and falling of unbelievers, and in the value set on the Stone by believers.[1]

Lastly, in the Book of Revelation, *the doctrine of the apostles* is, in a subordinate sense, represented as the *foundation* of the Church. For 'the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb;'[2] a glorious testimony to the truth and value of the apostles' doctrine, which, exhibiting Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, Mediator, and Head of the Church, was, in a certain sense, its foundation.

The practical instruction to be drawn from this subject, is of the deepest moment to every human being; —we are all building for ourselves an eternal Home; and whether that Home be one of unalloyed bliss, or of unmitigated woe, depends entirely on our choice of a

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 4–8. [2] Rev. xxi. 14.

foundation. This, however, is a truth not generally allowed, even in theory. In ereeting tabernacles for their perishing bodies, indeed, men look well to the foundation, before they begin to build; and he would be pronounced a madman, who should say, If my house look fair and solid above ground, no matter what the foundation be. But, in preparing their eternal abodes, men do not bestow so much precaution, nor argue so rationally. They begin to build, without knowing on what ground; nay, they avow it, as a principle, that if the superstructure be fair and symmetrical, it is of little consequence whether the foundation be sound or not; in other words, that if the life and eonduct appear moral and amiable, it is a point of speculative distinction, whether the confidenee be rested on Christ, or not. So little attention is paid to this point by many, that they never seriously examine what is their foundation for eternity, till forced to do so, by some sudden alarm, or by approaching dissolution. And then, alas! how false are the grounds upon which they too often rest! some, upon their general good conduet, and exemption from gross crime; others, upon their connexion with the visible Chureh, and regular performance of her rites; many, upon the mercy of God, without special trust in that only Way in which God has promised mercy; or, upon the merits of the Saviour, mixed with their own sincere, though confessedly defeetive, obedience. All these false foundations will be swept away, by the flood of God's righteous judgment; and great will be the fall of many buildings, which looked well in the eyes of men, but which, not being grounded on the only sure Foundation, were always hateful in the sight of God. For, since God has, from eternity, laid a Foundation for sinners to rest upon; —sinee he has revealed it to them, and deelared it to be

the *only* Foundation;—is it to be conceived, that he will allow them to build upon other foundations, and yet be safe? The thing is impossible; proved to be so by Revelation, and even by our own reason.

The choice before us, then, is not, whether we will build upon Christ, or not have to do with him at all; it is, whether we will build upon him, so as never to be confounded; or, 'stumble and fall' upon him here, and be 'ground to powder' by him hereafter; for, as Head-Stone of the Corner, it is his office to destroy all those that reject him, as well as to uphold all those that receive him.

Since, then, the alternative is so awful, how carefully should we examine, ere it be too late, whether we ourselves are building upon the Foundation which God has laid in Zion; whether *Jesus Christ himself*, in his Person, Work, and Offices, in his Atonement, Righteousness, and Mediation, be the sole ground of our hope and confidence, in the great concerns of salvation; or, if we be not resting partly on something else. Let us not too readily conclude, that our dependance on Christ is simple and exclusive; for in no one point are we more apt to be deceived by Satan and our own hearts. Even after long and painful experience of the impossibility of finding any thing in ourselves whereon to rest; and after, by the grace of God, we have been taught to rest, in the main, upon Jesus, we still unconsciously build some portion of our confidence upon the work of the Spirit *within* us, instead of laying our whole trust on the work of Christ *without* us; and so subtle is this temptation, that the believer is often sorely perplexed, in trying to ascertain his true state.

The difficulty of ascertaining whether we are truly built upon the right Foundation, is, however, lessened,

by comparing our own state with that of the 'lively stones' described by St Peter. We may discover whether we have *come* to Christ, and been *built* upon him, *by the estimation in which we hold him*, and *by our experience of the effects of union with him*. As to our *estimation* of Christ, does it correspond with that in which he is held by God his Father? Although we see him disallowed and rejected by an ungrateful world, do we *choose* and *delight* in him? Is he *precious* in our eyes? so precious, that all the things we can desire are not to be compared with him? If so, this is one good evidence.—Then, are we conscious of having had *life* transfused into our souls, by union with Christ, our living Foundation, so as to be made *lively stones* in the spiritual house, the holy temple of God? Have we this evidence of union with Christ, *that we are united to his people*; not only fixed on Him as the Foundation of our own security, but knit to all the stones composing the temple, by mutual union with Him, the great Corner-Stone? Do we know any thing experimentally of the in-dwelling of God through the Spirit? and are our eyes fixed, in humble faith, on Christ, as the Head-Stone of the Corner; waiting for the spiritual gifts which he is exalted to bestow, and ardently longing for the time, when this Stone, cut out without hands, shall become a great Mountain, and fill the whole earth?

If these evidences are, in any measure, ours, what abundant cause have we to bless and praise our God! and how gratefully should we acknowledge, that the same Almighty Hand, which laid the Foundation in Zion, has hewn our souls out of the quarry of nature, and cemented them upon it; otherwise this could never have been our happy case.

Let us ever remember, too, *the means by which* the

Stone *was prepared* for its place, as Foundation to the Church;—it was by being *graven;* it was by enduring the cross, despising the shame, that the blessed Jesus procured for us a ground of confidence, whereof we shall never be ashamed.

While, however, we rejoice in the assurance that all who build on Christ, as their Foundation, are safe; we would yet be mindful of the apostle's injunction,—'*But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.*'[1] For, while some believers, by their steady, consistent walk, and holy conversation, adorn the spiritual temple, as that of Solomon was adorned with gold, and silver, and precious stones, and so build, as that their work will endure throughout eternity;—others, by a mixture of unsuitable materials, by inconsistency, worldly-mindedness, unprofitableness, and negligence, add only wood, hay, and stubble to the building of God. Of such builders, St Paul says, 'They shall suffer loss; but they themselves shall be saved; yet so as by fire.' They barely secure their own salvation; but are not honoured by being made instrumental in the salvation of others. Thus they 'suffer loss,' as to comfort and usefulness here, and also in the degree of their eternal reward hereafter. For, although the merits of Christ form the sole *ground* of his people's future bliss; yet he has plainly declared, that the reward of each servant shall be *in proportion* to his improvement of the talents committed to him.

The apostle's injunction, it is true, is chiefly addressed to ministers, as the builders of God's temple. But as all true Christians are, in a subordinate sense, builders, or at least stones, in that temple, each is required to

[1] 1 Cor. iii. 10–15.

contribute to its beauty and union ; to be a lively and a growing stone.

Let this be the aim of every one of us,—that, being united to Christ by faith, and to our brethren by love, we may fill up the place God has assigned to us, in his temple below ; until he transport us to be 'pillars' in his glorious Temple above, whence we shall 'no more go out,' but be inscribed with the name of our God, and of the city of our God, the New Jerusalem.[1]

[1] Rev. iii. 12.

ESSAY XXXIII.

REFUGE — ROCK OR HIDING-PLACE, CITY OF REFUGE, ARK, STRONGHOLD, TOWER, FORTRESS, SHADOW — DWELLING-PLACE OR HABITATION — SANCTUARY.

ALL these figurative Titles may be classed under the general term, REFUGE, or place of safety. They are taken from refuges of three different descriptions. Some places are fitted for shelter by their *natural strength*, or capacity of concealment, such as rocks; some are prepared *by the art of man*, such as towers and fortresses; others are made secure by virtue of *God's express appointment*, as were the cities of refuge in the land of Canaan.

The Titles we are now to consider are found chiefly in the Old Testament; in the writings of Moses, David, and Isaiah. In their primary sense, they were used to express the Godhead, without distinction of Persons, as affording, by his infinite perfections, a sure Refuge for his people, in all dangers, temporal and spiritual. Thus, Moses encouraged Israel, by the assurance that the eternal God was his Refuge;[1] at another time, he styled God the Rock,[2] and at another, the Dwelling-place, of his people.[3] David and Isaiah, seldom satisfied with as-

[1] Deut. xxxiii. 27. [2] Deut. xxxii. 4. [3] Ps. xc. 1.

cribing to God one of these Titles at a time, utter many of them in a breath; as if to show that the combination of all that is strong and secure, by nature, by art, and by Divine appointment, is too feeble to express the perfect security enjoyed by those, who make the LORD their Refuge.

But although these Titles had perhaps, in their primary sense, no direct reference to the Redeemer; yet, as all the safety enjoyed by Israel of old was typical of the safety of the true Israel in all ages, we may fairly conclude, that those truly evangelical writers of the Old Testament frequently looked through the former to the latter; and that, whenever they spoke of God, as a Refuge for the *souls* of his people, they must have spoken of *God in Christ*, and, by faith, have beheld the glory of the Divine perfections, in the face of Immanuel. In no other way can God, the Holy, and the Just, be a Refuge for guilty rebels; it is only when the name JESUS is joined to the name JEHOVAH, that it forms a strong Tower, into which fallen man can run and be safe.[1]

These titles, then, may be considered as 'the Old 'Testament style for salvation;'[2] signifying, primarily, temporal protection; typically, the protection of the soul; and in the latter sense, applicable chiefly to our Lord Jesus Christ. In what sense, then, are we to consider Christ as a Refuge for man? In every sense in which man needs a Refuge; viz. from the common evils of life, from the accusations of Satan and of his own conscience; but chiefly, from the just vengeance of God on account of sin. In all these respects, the Lord Jesus is the Refuge of his people. They find in him protection in all outward evils; because, to those who are in him, 'all things work together for good;' and because they can

[1] Prov. xviii. 10. [2] Scott.

through him come to God, as their Father, to shelter them in every time of need. But it is as a Refuge from the terrors of guilt here, and from eternal punishment hereafter, that Jesus is, most truly and emphatically, a Refuge for sinners. He is so, in his Person, Character, and Offices, in his Atonement, Righteousness, and all-prevailing Intercession.

Should the question arise, Why are so many images employed to describe the Saviour in this character? it is not difficult to discover reasons, both in the situation, and in the constitution, of fallen man. First, in his *situation*, —as far as we know, there is no creature in the universe, who stands so much in need of a refuge, as man. The angels, placed in blissful security, need no refuge; the devils, doomed to irreversible woe, are beyond the reach of one; even the brutes are supplied with coverts and means of defence, suited to their peculiar dangers, and to their appointed period of existence. Man alone is placed in the midst of perils, which threaten the ruin of his best interests, without any natural means of defence or escape, yet within reach of a Refuge.

Do we then impugn the Divine wisdom and goodness; and argue that to man is shown less favour than to other orders of created beings? God forbid. Rather would we extol the special favour shown to man, in that he is thus placed, with the express design, that JEHOVAH may be his Refuge. Here, then, is one reason for the variety of emblems signifying Refuge, a reason drawn from man's *situation;* another may be found in man's *constitution*. Exposed and defenceless, though he be, man is naturally proud and self-dependant; unwilling to believe that he deeply needs a Refuge, and inclined to spurn the gracious invitation to flee for Refuge to Christ. And when, through grace, he is con-

vineed that safety is nowhere else to be found, he often, by a strange perverseness, doubts his freedom to avail himself of that only safe Refuge provided by God. It seems, therefore, the design of the Holy Ghost, by multiplying emblems of the Gospel Refuge, to convince the self-secure of their need of it, and to assure the fearful of their welcome to it.

In applying these emblems to the Lord Jesus, it is not necessary that we assign to each a particular meaning, as if each represented protection from some partieular danger: it is enough that we see in Him proteetion from *every* danger. If pursued by hostile powers, he is our Fortress; if wearied with the burden and heat of the day, he is to us 'the Shadow of a great Rock in a weary land;'[1] and whatever be the danger that threatens us, he is our Defence.

But, although all descriptive of one great Object, the titles before us present that Object under aspects somewhat dissimilar; some of them reeommending it by one set of qualifications, some by another. The term Rock, for instance, denotes the *strength* and *immutability* of the Refuge; the term Habitation, or Dwelling-plaee, describes the *comfort* enjoyed in it; that of Sanctuary, the *holiness* learned in it. Taking these three characteristics, then, as the prineipal ones by which the Gospel Refuge is distinguished, we shall endeavour, in what remains of this Essay, to exhibit it, 1st, 'as a *safe*,' 2dly, as a *happy*, and, 3dly, as a *holy*, Refuge.

But before we proceed to examine these qualities separately, let us seek to have our hearts affected by considering *in what manner our blessed Lord became a Refuge for sinners?*—It was by being itself rent, that the Rock of Ages became a Hiding-place for us. It was by

[1] Isaiah xxxii. 2.

enduring 'the blast of the terrible ones, as a storm against the wall,' that Jesus became to us 'a Covert from the tempest.'[1] It was by submitting to the fatal stroke of 'the avenger of blood,' that he became our 'City of Refuge;' and, by voluntarily quitting the heavenly sanctuary, that he became to us a Sanctuary. Let these considerations sink deep into our hearts, and endear to them, beyond expression, the Gospel Refuge.

It may also be remarked generally, that, as earthly refuges are fitted to shelter the body, by one of three causes,—by natural strength, by the agency of man, or by the appointment of God; so the Gospel Refuge is fitted to shelter the soul, by all these causes combined;—by *natural strength*, for Jesus is the Almighty God; by the *agency of man*, for, though he designed it not, man's wicked hands were employed to pierce the Rock, that it might, ever after, be a Hiding-place; and, *by the appointment of God;* for the astonishing combination, in the Person of Christ, of Divine perfections, with Human suffering and death, was the result of God's eternal purpose, the contrivance of his infinite wisdom, to form a Refuge for our condemned and helpless race.

We are now to illustrate separately some of the emblems before us, beginning with that of Rock, as denoting simply the *first qualification* of the Refuge, its *security*. This emblem must have been very expressive to the mind of an Israelite; for, 'Palestine being a mountainous country, had also many rocks, which made part 'of the strength of the country; for, in times of danger, 'they retired to them, where they found a refuge against 'any sudden irruptions of the enemy. When David 'was persecuted by Saul, he often hid himself in caverns

[1] Isaiah xxxii. 2.

'made in a rock, as at Maon, at Adullam, at En-gedi, 'where there was a cave of vast extent, in which David 'and his people concealed themselves, and Saul entered 'into it, and continued for some time, without discover-'ing them.'[1] David having so often found safety in a rock, it naturally became with him a favourite emblem of that All-powerful Guardian, through whose strength alone the natural rock was made effectual for his preservation. Accordingly, we find him constantly celebrating the praises of his God, under this emblematical title, and strengthening his faith, during present trials, by the recollection of past deliverances, as in Ps. xxxi. 2,3, 'Be thou my strong rock, for an house of defence to save me. For thou art my rock, and my fortress; therefore, for thy name's sake, lead me and guide me.'[2] So closely, indeed, did David, and other ancient writers, associate the emblematical name Rock, with the sacred name of God, that we find them using them almost as synonymous. Thus in 2 Sam. xxiii. David says, 'The *God* of Israel said, the *Rock* of Israel spake to me.' In the preceding chapter he says, 'For who is *God*, save the Lord? and who is a *Rock*, save our God?' And, in Isaiah xliv. 8, the name of God, in the text, is, in the margin, rendered Rock, 'Is there a *God* besides me?' Yea, there is no God (*no rock*), I know not any.'

Besides this natural emblem of the *security* of the Refuge, the Israelites had a legal emblem of the same, in the *cities of refuge*, and a most impressive historical one, in the *Ark of Noah*. Let us consider for a little, these two types or emblems. 'In order to provide for 'the security of those who unawares, and without 'any design, should kill a man, the Lord commanded 'Moses to appoint six cities of refuge, that whosoever

[1] Cruden. [2] See also Ps. lxii. 2, 7; lxxi. 3; xviii, 2, &c.

'suddenly, or against his will, should kill a man, might 'retire thither, and have time to prepare his defence and 'justification before the judges, so that the kinsman of 'the deceased might not pursue him thither, and kill 'him. Of these cities, there were three on each side 'Jordan, and they were situated at such convenient dis-'tances that one or other of them would be within half 'a day's journey of every part of the land.'[1]

'The Jewish writers inform us that, to afford every 'facility to those who thus fled for their life, the road to 'these cities was always preserved in good repair; and 'way-posts, inscribed *Refuge*, were placed wherever 'needful, that they might not so much as hesitate for 'a moment. This remarkable law, expressive of the 'deepest detestation of murder, yet providing most ef-'fectually against the innocent being punished with the 'guilty, is likewise an instructive typical representation of 'the salvation of the gospel.'[2] Those cities typified Jesus Christ, the Refuge for sinners, in that they were appointed by God himself for the benefit of those who had incurred the sentence of death, and must legally have suffered death, had they refused to flee to the Refuge. They resembled him also by the clearness with which they were pointed out, by their easy access, and yet, by the unwearied speed and unhesitating self-denial necessary for taking advantage of them. Reference is made to this institution, in the New Testament, by the expressions, '*Flee from the wrath to come;*'[3] and 'who have *fled for refuge* to lay hold upon the hope set before us.'[4]

But, of all types of Jesus, as the Refuge for sinners, the most striking and comprehensive ever displayed was Noah's Ark. This was a type, not contained merely in

[1] Cruden. [2] Scott on Numbers, xxxv. [3] Mat. iii. 7.
[4] Heb. vi. 18.

the legal code of a single nation, and to vanish along with the temporary dispensation to which it belonged:— it was a type displayed in God's dealing with the whole earth; of which the earth, to this day, bears awful traces, never to be effaced till this material universe shall be itself destroyed. The typical points here are very numerous. The Ark was a refuge prepared by God's command, at prodigious expense and toil: it was built in the sight, and in the hearing of all men; for, during the one hundred and twenty years that the long-suffering of God waited, while it was preparing, had the preaching and the example of Noah been duly regarded, all the inhabitants of the earth might have heard of the threatened judgment, and of the only refuge. Yet we read not of any applying for admittance into the Ark, although we may be sure that none who did so, in repentance and faith, would have been excluded. On the contrary, they all went on in carelessness and carnal indulgence, 'eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away.'[1] None entered the Ark but a few, and those few were selected by God; yet they acted as free moral agents, under the influence of hope and fear, and a regard for their own safety. Above all, they acted from *faith;* they believed God's threatenings, although contrary to any thing before experienced, and, although long delayed; they believed his promises, and trusted in the Refuge which he had provided, though, to human wisdom, it might have seemed inadequate to save them during the tremendous crisis. St Paul says, 'By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved

[1] Mat. xxiv. 38, 39.

with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.'[1] We have, therefore, apostolical authority for concluding that Noah, when he committed himself, and his family, to the Ark, saw in it a type of the spiritual Refuge, to be manifested in future ages; and that *his* faith was substantially the same as that of believers under the Gospel dispensation; since by it he '*became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.*'

Second Qualification.—We have now, by three striking emblems, the Rock, the City of Refuge, and the Ark, illustrated the *safety* afforded by the Gospel Refuge. But did we stop here, we should stop far short of the truth. The emblems already considered do indeed describe powerfully a place of *security;* but they convey no ideas of *comfort* or *happiness*, beyond that of danger escaped. But our merciful God has furnished us with another and a more delightful emblem,—that of Dwelling-place, which is indeed a literal translation of the word in other places rendered Refuge, and may be understood as meaning *Home*, *Rest*, *Felicity*.[2] When a trembling sinner first flees from the wrath to come, he looks for nothing but safety; and, did he find nothing more, he would have cause for everlasting gratitude: but this is not all that he finds; for, when the first emotions of wonder at his marvellous escape have subsided, and he has time to survey his Hiding-place, he discovers that, while for strength, it resembles the Rock, or the City of Refuge, it possesses, at the same time, all the charms of a happy Home, 'a peaceable habitation, a quiet resting-place;' yea, that the protection it affords is of so tender a

[1] Heb. xi. 7. [2] See Scott on the Title of Ps. xc.

nature as to resemble that enjoyed by the helpless nestling, under the wings of its parent.[1]

This idea of a Dwelling-place, our Lord suggests, when he says, 'Abide in me, and I in you;' when he promises that those who keep his commandments shall abide in his love;—what a blessed abode! He also invites the weary and heavy laden to come unto him for Rest; and an apostle affirms, from personal experience, 'We which have believed do enter into rest.'[2]

Third Qualification.—True happiness is inseparable from holiness. Jesus, therefore, is made to all who flee to him, not only a *safe* and *happy*, but a *holy* Refuge, a *Sanctuary*. In Ezekiel xi. 16, the Lord promises that he will be to his people 'a little sanctuary;' and, in Isaiah viii. 14, Messiah is pointed out as 'a sanctuary,' by this title being associated with the one formerly considered, as belonging to him, viz. 'a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.'

Asylums bearing the name of *sanctuaries*, have often been perverted, by the wickedness of man, to the encouragement of crime; by sheltering notorious offenders from the hand of justice; but the Gospel Asylum is a real Sanctuary, sanctifying every one who enters it. Many indeed aver, that consciousness of *safety*, and enjoyment of *happiness* in Christ, render men careless in the attainment of *holiness;* but those persons know not the nature of the Gospel Refuge; they have not entered it themselves, else they could not so grossly mistake it.

We shall have occasion to enlarge more on this head, when we come to view the Saviour as made unto us Sanctification. Meanwhile, we may remark, the delightful *appropriation* of which this Sanctuary is capable. Although vast enough to shelter the whole human race, yet

[1] Ps. xxxvi. 7; Ruth ii. 12; Luke xiii. 34. [2] Heb. iv. 3.

it is to every individual believer, '*a little sanctuary;*' its blessings may be enjoyed by each, as fully as though it were erected for himself alone; and wherever he may be cast, at a distance from the ordinances and the people of God, he carries his 'little sanctuary' along with him, and there enjoys the inestimable privilege of communing with 'the High and Holy One that inhabiteth eternity.'

Now, since it cannot be denied that all men deeply need a Refuge from the wrath to come; since, as we have seen, a Refuge has been provided and revealed by God, entirely suited to their necessities; and since the entrance to it is ever open wide, with these gracious words inscribed over its portal, 'Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' 'Him that cometh unto me, I will in nowise cast out,' why do not *all* men flee to the Refuge? or rather, Why do *so few* flee to it?

Three causes may be assigned for this infatuation, corresponding to the three qualifications by which we have described the Refuge; 1. *Men believe not their need of its security;* 2. *They know not its happiness;* and, 3. *They desire not its holiness.*

To those who feel *safe*, the offer of a Refuge must appear an officious, though perhaps a well-meant, kindness. We must, like Noah, 'be moved with fear,' ere we will enter the Ark. Now, though few men are bold enough to disclaim, in words, their need of Christ and his salvation; and, though few are without some fear of approaching judgment, still this fear is, in general, so slight and superficial, as to produce no saving effect. Far from impelling to instantaneous flight, and rendering subordinate all other concerns, it is itself made subordi-

nate to the trifling concerns of time, and allows a man to hesitate, and loiter, and delay, till death, like the flood, sweeps him away. It allows him deliberately to settle all his worldly and family affairs, before fleeing to the 'City of Refuge,' although he knows that 'the avenger of blood' may be close behind him.

But, 2dly, Men do not repair to the Gospel Refuge, *because they know not the happiness to be found in it.* They think only of the sacrifices to be made in fleeing to it, and know not how richly these are compensated by the joys and comforts it yields. It is true, he who flees to the 'City of Refuge' must renounce many things he formerly loved. He must forsake the world as his home, and even the endearments of domestic affection must be sacrificed, in as far as they impede his flight. But the Saviour's promise is on record, and has been confirmed in the experience of many a believer ;—'There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come, life everlasting.'

Oh! did men but know the happiness to be found in Jesus, the 'joy and peace in believing,' 'the comfort of the Holy Ghost,' the rest to the weary, the 'rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' to be found in him ; they would see, that a regard to present enjoyment, no less than to future safety, urges them to flee to him without delay.

But, 3dly, Men will not flee to the Refuge, *because they hate its holiness.* They know that they cannot bring in their sinful indulgences along with them ; and therefore, they stand without, braving all the fury of the tempest. This is our reply to the calumny which accuses

the Refuge of an unholy tendency,—It is its very holiness which deters thousands from entering it.

While these causes operate to the fatal exclusion of unbelievers, it is to be regretted that the same causes operate, though in a less degree, to diminish the comfort and mar the holiness of believers. These last do indeed believe and feel their need of the Refuge; but they are prone to fall into one of two errors,—either losing the keen sense they once had of their need of it, or, by a perverse ingenuity, arguing, that the Refuge cannot be intended for their use, just because they stand so desperately in need of it. Therefore, in spite of all the gracious assurances of Him who reared it, and who beseeches them freely to enter, and taste its joys, these timid (and, though they know it not, these self-righteous) souls stand trembling at the threshold; just far enough in, perhaps, to ensure their safety, but not far enough to afford them comfort; because they are continually in doubt, whether they have crossed the sacred bounds or not.

Thus weak believers lose much comfort; and thus also they retard the progress of their sanctification. They are afraid, indeed, to make a cordial and free use of the Refuge, lest they should, in consequence, grow careless in the attainment of holiness. But in this they greatly mistake. Carelessness is induced, not by a lively sense of gratitude for admission into the Refuge; but by forgetfulness of the dangers we have escaped, and of the mode whereby our deliverance was accomplished. And the holiest believers are, in general, those who are most fully persuaded of their own safety, and who enjoy the greatest share of spiritual happiness. This rule, however, is not invariable. Many saints continue long in doubt as to their own safety, and consequently have

little spiritual joy. But the last emblem given of the Refuge, that of a Sanctuary, affords the surest test of our having really entered it. For we may be *safe*, without being *happy;* but not without being *holy*, or, at least, without desiring above all things so to be.

This subject must not be dismissed without adverting to the close connexion, observable in the word of God, between the *promises of Defence* to his own people, and the *threats of Destruction* to his enemies. In Isaiah xxvi. 20, 21, the Lord invites his people to come into their chambers, and shut their doors about them, that they may escape the ruin he is about to bring upon the ungodly; 'For, behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.' In the propheey of Nahum, this contrast is powerfully drawn; 'The Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him. But with an over-running flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies.'[1] They who now despise and refuse the only Refuge, will one day vainly attempt to hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains. These shall not be able to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne, nor from the wrath of the Lamb.[2]

Let us all, then, be wise in time; and 'turn us to the strong-hold,' while yet we are 'prisoners of hope.' But seeing it is too high for us to ascend, without the help of our God, let us fervently ery to him, 'Lead me to the Rock that is higher than I.' If we have already, by God's help, 'fled for refuge' to Jesus, let us abide more closely in him than heretofore; and, on every new

[1] Nah. i. 7, 8. [2] Rev. vi. 15, 16.

alarm, or danger, resort to him afresh. We shall have daily, hourly need to do this, until,

—‘ Pure, immortal, sinless, freed,
‘ We, through the Lamb, shall be decreed,
‘ Shall see the Father, face to face,
‘ And need no more a Hiding-place.’

ESSAY XXXIV.

SHIELD AND BUCKLER—ENSIGN OR BANNER—THE LORD OUR BANNER—CAPTAIN OF THE LORD'S HOST—SEED OF THE WOMAN.

THE titles now before us seem, at first sight, to present Christ and his people, under an aspect incompatible with that under which we last contemplated them. If, as we have lately seen, He is the Refuge of his people, wherein they hide, securely and happily; the Stronghold, into which they run, and are safe; whence is it that he assumes Titles which imply that they are still exposed to perils and warfare? If, as soon as we 'believe,' we 'do enter into rest,' how is it that we are still called to engage in mortal conflict, so perilous as to require Divine armour, and a Divine Leader?

To this question it might be a sufficient reply, That the compatibility of 'a stable peace,' with 'a constant strife,' is one of those seeming contradictions, in the Christian life, which experience alone can explain. A more satisfactory reply may, however, be given, by explaining that the enemies of which we spoke in the foregoing Essay, are of a different description from those of which we are now to speak; that *from* the *former*, we must *fly*; whereas, *with* the *latter*, we must *fight*. From

the accusations of conscience, from the curse of a broken Law, and from the just vengeance of the Lawgiver, we have no safety but in flight; and Jesus, accordingly, offers himself as our Refuge. But, with the corruptions of our own hearts, with the allurements of an evil world, and with the temptations of Satan, we must fight; therefore, the same gracious Saviour, the 'All in All' of his people, offers himself also as our SHIELD and BUCKLER, to cover us in the day of battle; as our BANNER, to unite and encourage us in our combined struggle with his and our enemies; as the CAPTAIN OF OUR SALVATION, to lead and command us, to defend us against every foe, and make us finally and completely victorious.

Let us, in the first place, briefly explain the emblematical Titles before us. 'The *Buckler*, or *Shield*, was a 'piece of defensive armour, wielded by the left hand, in 'the manner of the Highland targets, to ward off the 'blows of arrows, swords, or spears, wherever they threat-'ened to strike.—God's *taking hold of shield and buck-'ler*,[1] imports the interposition of his Providence, for the 'protection and deliverance of his people, and for the 'destruction of his enemies. God is the *Shield* and '*Buckler*[2] of his people; his truth and favour are their '*shield and buckler;* and he bestows on them the *shield* 'of salvation. In accomplishing his promises to them, 'and his threatenings against their enemies, he kindly 'and affectionately encourages, protects, saves, and de-'livers them.'[3]

It may be remarked, of these Titles, as of those denoting Refuge, that when understood of *Providential* defence, they apply to the Godhead, without distinction of Persons; but, when understood of the defence of the

[1] Ps. xxxv. 2. [2] Ps. xviii. 2, 35; Ps. xci. 4.

[3] Brown's Dictionary.

soul, or of the *Church*, they apply chiefly to God the Son, the divine Mediator, appointed by the Father to defend and conquer for the Church. *Banner*, *Ensign*, or *Standard*, denotes the 'colours borne in times of war, 'for assembling, directing, distinguishing, and encouraging the troops. Christ is a Standard, or Ensign; 'preached to Jews and Gentiles, he is the great means 'of assembling them to himself, and distinguishing them 'from others; he directs and animates them in their 'spiritual journey, and their warfare with sin, Satan, 'and the world; and enables them to oppose corruption 'and error; and for the same reason he is called a '*Standard-bearer*.'[1]

Moses, to record the signal victory, obtained by the Lord, for Israel, over Amalek, built an altar, and called the name of it JEHOVAH-Nissi, that is, THE LORD my Banner.[2] Victory has been won for the true Israel, over all their foes, by the Lord Jesus Christ; he is therefore, to them, JEHOVAH-Nissi.

'Captain of our Salvation,' is a title which occurs but once in the sacred Scriptures.[3] It seems nearly analogous to the titles, 'Prince and Saviour,'[4] 'Prince of Life,'[5] 'Author of eternal salvation.'[6] And the importance of the office which it denotes, is proved by its having been foreshown, under the Old Dispensation, by a visible manifestation of Jehovah, styling himself, 'Captain of the Lord's host.' This mysterious Being, who appeared to Joshua in the form of a *Man*, yet claimed *Divine* homage, and who stood armed, ready to lead the Lord's host to battle and to victory, is generally allowed to have been God the Son, anticipating his Incarnation and his conquests in the flesh.[7]

[1] Brown's Dictionary. [2] Exod. xvii. 15. [3] Heb. ii. 10.
[4] Acts v. 31. [5] Acts iii. 15. [6] Heb. v. 9. [7] Josh. v. 13–15.

Without entering upon a minute application of the several titles before us, we proceed to the general lesson taught by them, viz. that the people of Christ are engaged in deadly warfare; and that from Him alone they derive all their might, whether for Defence or for Victory.

But, in order to appreciate the power and grace of the Saviour, in defending and conquering for his people, we must understand something of the nature of those enemies, by whom his people are attacked. They are threefold, and all leagued together. His people have to contend with the desperate wickedness of *their own hearts*, and with the example and enticements of a *world* lying in wickedness; and these, unaided, would be formidable enemies. But alas! they are not unaided. In secret alliance with them is a *third* class of enemies, whose power and malice so far exceed theirs, that an experienced warrior, who had fought many hard battles with the two former, deemed them scarce worthy of notice, compared with the latter. 'We wrestle not' (says St Paul), 'against flesh and blood:'—these, though formidable, are not our worst adversaries; 'but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'[1] Against *these* enemies, in particular, the apostle exhorts his brethren to arm themselves. 'Put on (he says), the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against *the wiles of the devil.*'

Having, then, such high authority for considering the powers of hell as the most formidable enemies which the soldiers of Christ have to encounter, and against which especially, they must arm themselves, it shall be the chief object of this Essay to exhibit the Lord Jesus as

[1] Eph. vi. 12.

Defender from, and Conqueror over, those powers, for his people. This view of the Saviour is confirmed by the statement of St John,—'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil;'[1] and by that of St Paul, regarding the great object of Christ's incarnation and death, 'That he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.'[2]

In this character, as the Conqueror of Satan, Immanuel was first revealed to the human race.[3] This branch of the Christian warfare, then, deserves our most serious study; and it seems the more necessary to give to it a separate consideration, that it is too little remembered even by believers, and made a matter of jesting among the thoughtless and profane. A belief in the reality of Satanic influence was, during the darker ages of the Church, mingled with much superstition, and many absurdities; and, as if fearful of falling into these errors, professing Christians, in more enlightened days, have run into the opposite extreme, practically forgetting the doctrine, if they do not cast it aside, as doubtful or obsolete. Satan himself, doubtless, encourages this scepticism, that he may the more successfully carry on his work of destruction. If any readers have hitherto thought lightly on this subject, may they now be persuaded to give it their most serious consideration.

On a subject so mysterious, our only safe guide is the word of God; and, even here, we shall be disappointed if we look for connected and systematic information. Enough, however, is revealed to awaken our fears, to rouse our vigilance, and to convince us that no power less than Divine, can bring us off victorious, or even safe, from the combat.

[1] 1 John iii. 8. [2] Heb. ii. 14. [3] Gen. iii. 15.

The very names given to the Evil One, in Scripture, are sufficient to make us tremble. He is called 'The Devil,' from a Greek word, which signifies a calumniator, or accuser, 'who accuseth us before God, day and night;' 'Satan,' from a Hebrew word, signifying an adversary, an enemy, an accuser;' 'Belial,' a Hebrew word, meaning one who is good for nothing, a libertine, one who is extremely wicked. Besides these names, he is in Scripture called 'The Angel of the Bottomless Pit;' 'the Destroyer,' 'Prince of this world,' 'Prince of Darkness,' 'A roaring Lion,' 'A Sinner from the Beginning,' 'A Liar,' 'Deceiver,' 'The Great Red Dragon,' 'Leviathan,' 'Serpent,' 'Murderer,' 'Tormentor,' 'The God of this World,' 'The Tempter.' Nor is he a *single* adversary; he is 'Beelzebub, the prince of the devils,' having under his command innumerable evil spirits.[1]

Such, then, is the adversary with whom we have to contend. Very soon after the creation of man, this subtle and malignant foe accomplished his overthrow,—an overthrow which must have proved fatal to the whole race, but for the interposition of Divine wisdom, mercy, and power. No sooner, however, did the contest begin, than a conquering Champion was promised to man, in those few but comprehensive words, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed, and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.'[2] While, in these words, victory was promised to the Seed of the woman, a fierce and continual conflict was also predicted, in which the Conqueror himself must be wounded.

After the awful period of the fall, we find few instances on record of the personal agency of Satan, though every page of man's history too plainly proclaims his

[1] See Cruden on Devil. [2] Gen. iii. 15.

dire influence. We read of his accusing Job before God, and being permitted to afflict him;[1] of his provoking David to number the people;[2] we read of a lying spirit in the mouth of Ahab's prophets;[3] of Satan standing at the right hand of Joshua, the high-priest, to resist him.[4] But the extent of his empire, and the nature of his assaults, do not seem to have been distinctly revealed, till that eventful period arrived, when the enmity between him and the Seed of the woman came to its grand crisis.

It seems evident, that greater power over the minds and bodies of men was granted to the devils, at the period of our Lord's ministry, than either before or since. We know not the nature of that power; but we may discern a reason for its being granted, in the scope thereby furnished for displaying the infinitely superior power of the Seed of the woman, thus causing him to shine in all the lustre of incarnate Deity, as Conqueror over the powers and principalities of darkness.

This brings us to the main object of the present Essay, viz. to consider in what manner the Lord Jesus resists and conquers Satan, on behalf of his people. We may consider, I. How Jesus resisted and conquered Satan personally, during his abode on earth; II. How he vanquished him in his death; III. How he enables his people to resist and conquer him, since his ascension to heaven.

The first of these heads may be subdivided into three; for there were three principal ways in which the Lord Jesus warred against Satan, during his life on earth,— 1. By exposing his true character and devices, and putting men on their guard against them; 2. By successfully repelling the assaults of the Tempter, in his own person;

[1] Job. i. 6–12. [2] 1 Chron. xxi. 1. [3] 1 Kings xxii. 22.
[4] Zech. iii. 1.

3. By dethroning him from his empire over the souls and bodies of men, and freeing them from his dreadful tyranny. He also, by converting grace, delivered men from the *eternal* yoke of Satan, during his earthly sojourn; but this deliverance was not peculiar to the period of his incarnation.

1*st*, Then, Christ warred against Satan, *by exposing his character and devices, and by warning his disciples against them.* He showed that it was *the devil* who caught away the word sown in men's hearts;[1] who sowed tares among the good seed;[2] who desired to have believers, that he might sift them as wheat;[3] who, being himself a liar and a murderer from the beginning, taught the wicked, who are his children, to lie and to murder.[4] Christ also declared that the eternal punishment of the wicked would be in that same dreadful fire that is prepared for the devil and his angels.[5]

2*dly*, Our blessed Champion fulfilled his office, by condescending to encounter our enemy *in person*. He submitted to be tempted of Satan, on the Mount, in the Garden, and during that awful season when he said, 'This is your hour and the power of darkness;'[6] and, while in his unknown agonies of body and soul, the latter clause of the ancient prediction was fulfilled, his own heel was bruised; so, in the complete victory he won over the Tempter, by resisting his fiercest assaults, and most subtle stratagems, the first clause of the prediction was, in one sense, equally fulfilled, the Seed of the woman bruised the serpent's head.

But, 3*dly*, It was not in defensive warfare, alone, that our Lord personally conflicted with Satan. He waged *open warfare* with him, compelling his agents to quit

[1] Mat. xiii. 19. [2] Mat. xiii. 39. [3] Luke xxii. 31.
[4] John viii. 44. [5] Mat. xxv. 41.
[6] Mat. iv; John. xiv. 30; Luke xxii. 53.

their hold on men; and this, not only by his own personal authority, but by delegating the same to his apostles. For, among the miraculous powers which he gave them was, 'power over unclean spirits;'[1] and the 'seventy returned with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.'[2] To this Jesus replied, 'I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven,'—alluding perhaps to that passage in Isaiah, 'How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!'[3] 'By which he intimated, that the kingdom of the 'devil was coming to a period; that Satan should soon 'lose his power and dominion in the world, by the 'preaching and miracles of the apostles.'[4]

As the *Second* branch of our subject, we are now to consider, *How Christ conquered Satan in his death.* Deliverance from the temporary dominion of the Evil One, formed but the sign and token of that great deliverance which the Saviour came to accomplish for his people; as the slaying of a single Egyptian by Moses, in defence of an Israelite, was the sign that he should deliver the whole nation of Israel from Egyptian bondage. Christ came 'to destroy the works of the devil,' for every one of his people, *entirely* and *eternally.* Now, the great work of the devil was the introduction of *Sin;* involving the *guilt*, the *power*, and the *effects of sin.* And from all these, Christ came to deliver his people. He came to expiate the *guilt* of their sin; to free them from the *power* of sin; and to deliver them from the worst *effect* of sin, namely, *Death:* death, in its terror, its sting, and its terrible consequences. All this he accomplished, not during his life, but *by his death.* The Captain of our salvation took part of flesh and blood, 'that *through death* he might destroy him that had the

[1] Mark vi. 7. [2] Luke 10. 17. [3] Isaiah xiv. 12. [4] Cruden.

power of death, that is, the devil.'[1] How astonishing is this mystery; that, in order to conquer Satan, God must become Man, and as Man, must suffer and die! 'Assuredly,' says Beza, 'here was need of strength rather 'than of weakness. The apostle therefore declares, that 'to render the victory the more glorious, it was peculiarly suitable, that Satan, the conqueror of man, should 'be laid prostrate by a Man; and so, by the very death 'of a man, he might be destroyed, as by his own weapons.'[2] As 'the Captain of our salvation,' Jesus was '*made perfect through sufferings.*' It behoved him to suffer being tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted.[3] It behoved him also to suffer death, even the death of the Cross, that, in that same nature which had sinned, the punishment of sin might be endured, and its guilt expiated. And for these purposes, it behoved him to take flesh and blood, that he might be susceptible of temptation and death; that, as our Brother and Surety, he might gain the victory over both; and that, in his Person, wherein the Human nature is so wonderfully united to the Divine, authority might be vested to continue the warfare with Satan, until he be shut up for ever in the bottomless pit.

We are now to consider, in the *Third* place, *in what sense, and by what means, the Lord Jesus resists and conquers Satan, now that he is ascended to heaven.* But before doing so, it will be necessary to take a slight survey of the state of the contest, since the glorious victory was achieved by Jesus in his death.

It has been already remarked, that the Scriptures do not give any connected or systematic information on the subject of Satanic influence. On this, as on many other

[1] Heb. ii. 14. [2] Beza, in Scott, on Heb. ii. 14.
[3] Heb. ii. 10, 17, 18.

points, we can only arrive at the truth, by comparing statements apparently opposite. For instance, while Jesus proclaimed the glory of his victory, saying, 'I beheld Satan, as lightning, fall from heaven;'—while he said, 'Now shall the prince of this world be cast out;'—he intimated, nevertheless, that formidable power still remained in the hands of the great Adversary. See, his warning to Peter, of the designs of Satan against him, designs only frustrated by his own intercession. See also Christ's admonition to all the Apostles, to watch and pray, that they might not enter into temptation: and his introducing into the short but comprehensive prayer which he taught them, this petition, 'Lead us not into temptation.' We find the same apparent opposition of statements on this subject in the writings of the Apostles. While St Paul, for instance, exults in declaring that Jesus Christ had spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in his cross;[1] he yet represents believers as engaged in mortal conflict with those same principalities and powers; and we see this great Apostle continually on the watch, lest Satan should get an advantage of himself or his converts.[2] At one time he fears lest, by some means, the Tempter had tempted them, and so, his labour were in vain.[3] At another time, he ascribes the hinderance raised to his visiting them, to the opposition of Satan.[4] Again, he ascribes to the power of 'the god of this world,'[5] the small success of a preached Gospel, the blindness of men's minds, and consequent perdition of their souls. Even the 'thorn' in his own flesh, which he received as sent by God to humble him, he styles, the messenger of Satan to buffet him;[6] thus attesting the truth, that God makes use of

[1] Col. ii. 15; Ephes. vi. 11–18. [2] 2 Cor. ii. 11. [3] 1 Thes. iii. 5.
[4] 1 Thes. ii. 18. [5] 2 Cor. iv. 4. [6] 2 Cor. xii. 7.

Satan, to prove good men, as well as to chastise bad ones.

St John also, while he declares, 'For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil;'[1] yet intimates that many still existed in the world, who were as much 'children of the wicked one' as was Cain.

If we trace this subject farther, into the last Revelation given to men, we find, there, more explicit mention of the personal agency of Satan. He is distinguished by a greater variety of appellations; his horrid features are more vividly portrayed; and his inveterate malice, and furious opposition to the cause and kingdom of Messiah, are more fully brought to light; as well as the final victory which Messiah is to gain over him. In four out of the seven Epistles to the churches, direct allusion is made, by the Son of God, to the devices of Satan, as exposing those churches to the most imminent peril. He represents them as placed, '*even where Satan's seat is;*'—'*where Satan dwelleth;*'—*where he holds his synagogue;* where he practises his deepest arts of seduction.[2]

Without attempting to affix a particular meaning to each prediction of this mysterious book, concerning the Destroyer, we remark generally, that his fury and malignity are here described as becoming more violent, as the termination of his reign approaches. He opens the bottomless pit,[3] and forthwith issue Darkness and Destruction. He leads forth his own legions, and stirs up wicked men of all descriptions, to make war with the Lamb and his people. But at length, after a long imprisonment, inflicted on him by the Angel Jehovah; and a short release, subsequent to that imprisonment, Satan

[1] 1 John iii. 8–12. [2] Rev. ii. 13; ii. 24; iii. 9.
[3] Rev. ix; xvii; xix.

will be cast down, with all that belong to him, into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented day and night, for ever: and the victory of the Lamb will be final, complete, and eternal.[1]

We have now, according to the plan adopted in former Essays, traced our subject, historically and prophetically, through those parts of Scripture, where it is most prominent. And we may well inquire, whether any intimation has been found of the *cessation* or *decrease* of Satan's hostility, during the age in which we ourselves are living? Have we not, on the contrary, found intimations of the *increasing hostility* of the Adversary, till he shall be for ever shut up?

With such Divine warnings and revelations, then, are we not without excuse, if we forget and despise the machinations of our Adversary? Yet it is feared, that professing Christians, in general, far from being able to say, with St Paul, '*We are not ignorant of his devices*,'[2] must confess, if they speak honestly, that *they are sadly ignorant of his devices*. Some of us, perhaps, are scarcely conscious of having ever been tempted, and almost doubt whether the Evil One has any influence over us at all. Whence arises this unconsciousness? Not from our happy exemption from the general lot of believers; not from our superior vigilance, we may be sure: but from our *ignorance* of the devices of Satan; from our 'giving place to the devil,'[3] instead of 'resisting'[4] him. When we go with the stream, we feel not its strength. But, let us remember, that where no struggle is, there can be no victory; and that the crown of glory is laid up, not for those who have been spared the combat; but for those who have 'fought the good fight' and 'overcome.'

[1] Rev. xx. xxi. [2] 2 Cor. ii. 11. [3] Ephes. iv. 27. [4] James iv. 7.

It is true, the suggestions of Satan are not easily distinguished from those of our own evil hearts; and the degrees of temptation vary greatly. Some, by natural dispositions, Providential arrangements, and the merciful guardianship of the Lord, are preserved from the severe struggles which many of their brethren have to encounter. But all who arrive at years of reflection must endure, more or less, the assaults of the Tempter. His subtlety is extreme, in adapting his temptations to the characters and circumstances of his victims. To the vicious and abandoned, he needs but suggest the most horrid crime, and offer an occasion for its commission, promising in return some paltry reward; and they eagerly catch the fatal bait, and are 'carried captive by him at his will.' With the less openly vicious, he proceeds more warily; inviting them first to acts merely questionable; and then leading them gradually to overstep the bounds of decency, till despair seals their doom. But alas! he can ruin the moral and amiable, even allowing them to remain moral and amiable. Lulling them in false security, apart from Christ, and blinding their minds to the light of the glorious Gospel, he leads them by a path, more smooth, but equally ruinous, to the gates of hell.

It might, however, have been expected, that God's own children would be exempted from the assaults of Satan. On the contrary, it is on them that he showers his most fiery darts. 'Envy is a prominent feature of 'his character, therefore it is another hell to him to see 'sinners restored to the favour of God, and his glorious 'image engraven upon them.'[1] And the entrance upon a religious course is the commencement of a warfare which terminates only at death. This event, however, forms the grand crisis of the conflict, both to the wicked

[1] Cruden.

and the righteous. For, whereas the wicked, after having been lulled and flattered by Satan during life, and allowed to follow their own evil ways undisturbed, are, at death, given up to his uncontrolled power of tormenting; the righteous, after being, through life, persecuted, tempted, and harassed, by Satan, are at death delivered out of his hands entirely and for ever.

Doubtless, the Lord could and would spare his dear children this harassing warfare, were it consistent with his own glory in them, and with their eternal good; but for both these ends, it is necessary that they endure temptation. In attacking the people of God, however, Satan is obliged to use more subtlety than with the men of the world. He knows that nothing will so effectually prevail with them as what has a semblance of piety; but this is no difficulty to him. We read, that the devils would, had they been permitted, have testified to the truth of our Lord's Messiahship,[1] and to the faithfulness of Paul's preaching.[2] And still they practise with fatal success, by preaching detached parts of the truth, mingled with their own lying errors, and so distorted as to disagree with other parts equally fundamental. They prevail with some of the children of God to adopt these distorted and mistaken views, instead of the pure, harmonious doctrine of the Gospel; corrupting their minds from the simplicity that is in Christ, and amusing them with idle dreams and vain speculations. This brings the Gospel itself into disrepute, lessens the influence and usefulness of its followers, and deters inquirers from joining them. In many such ways, the devil seduces believers into errors of doctrine.

He seduces them also into many errors of practice. Not only does he tempt them to sloth, self-indulgence, world-

[1] Luke iv. 34. [2] Acts xvi. 16–18.

liness, and many other actual sins, which keep them at a distance from Christ; he turns their very duties into temptations, adapting his snares to their peculiar habits and inclinations.

If, for instance, he see them eagerly engaging in active measures for the advancement of Christ's cause, and the good of their fellow-creatures, he will tempt them to neglect secret communion with God, and the care of their own souls. If, on the other hand, he see them delighting in prayer, contemplation, and retirement, he will tempt them to indulge in these to the neglect of active and social duties. Even the diligent study of Scripture may be turned, by our Enemy, into a temptation. He will urge us to study it in a critical spirit, that he may thus divert us from studying it in a devotional spirit. And he has no objection to our advancing in a speculative knowledge of Christ, if thus he can withdraw us from that experimental knowledge which transforms us into the image of our Lord.

But we cannot pretend to enumerate one of a thousand of those arts, whereby the Deceiver labours to draw the children of God from duty and from happiness: they are innumerable; and, alas! he finds too ready an ally in their own bosoms. The great wonder is, how any poor believer escapes out of his hands. Not one of them could escape, were it not that *a stronger than the strong man has come upon him, and overcome him, taken from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divided his spoils.*[1] Yes, blessed be God, the prince of this world has no power to destroy the children of God; his power is restrained and resisted by the Captain of our Salvation; and although he wound, he cannot kill, those who are under the protection of Jesus.

[1] Luke xi. 21, 22.

Having now considered the state of the contest between Satan and the people of Christ, and the urgent need they still have of his defending and conquering Arm; we are at length prepared to consider *by what means he accomplishes their defence and their victory.*

We have seen, that in the former part of his work, as Destroyer of the devil, our blessed Champion fought alone; that he encountered the Enemy in single combat. But in that part which he is now carrying on (the destruction of the devil's work in the soul and in the Church), he requires his people to fight along with him; under his orders, and after his example. Before enlisting his soldiers, however, he must rescue them from the tyrannical yoke of the enemy; from the triple chain described in Eph. ii. 2, 3, viz. '*the course of this world*,' '*the prince of the power of the air*,' and '*the lusts of the flesh*.' He must 'turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.' He sees them, now, willing to follow him: but, knowing their weakness and cowardice, his next office is, to clothe them with *armour*, which, 'in plain language signifies, such gifts and graces 'as are for the defence of the soul, and whereby it is 'made victorious over its foes.'[1]

It is immaterial whether we view the Lord Jesus as himself the 'Shield and Buckler,' and the 'Banner' of his people; or, as 'the Captain of their Salvation,' who supplies them with, and teaches them to use, their defensive armour, and gives a banner to them that fear him. The latter view harmonizes best with the plan of this Essay. We shall, therefore, adopt it: and consider next, *how Jesus teaches and enables his soldiers to fight and to conquer.*

The *armour* which he gives them is particularly de-

[1] Cruden.

scribed in Ephesians vi. with special reference to the warfare with Satan. 'Stand therefore (says the Apostle), having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'

It is not easy to define precisely the meaning of these different pieces of the Christian's armour. The *girdle of truth* seems to be *uprightness and sincerity of heart*, which gives a steadiness and uniformity to the conduct, and serves, as a girdle, to brace on the other parts of the armour, and keep them all in their proper places.

The *breastplate of righteousness* may have reference to the *outward conduct*, and signify *a constant regard to the practice of holiness* in the sight of God, and of justice and integrity in the whole of our dealings with our fellow-creatures, which, like a breastplate, defends the vitals from many a dangerous thrust of the Enemy.

Having *our feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace*, seems to be that we have a prepared and resolved frame of heart, which the Gospel teaches and works; and which, like leg or foot harness, enables us to walk with a steady pace in the ways of religion, notwithstanding the hardships, difficulties, and dangers that attend it.

All other armour would be useless, without the *shield of faith*, which puts us under the protection of Him who is our Almighty Shield. 'Faith is called a *shield*, be-
'cause it derives strength from Christ, for overcoming
'the temptations of Satan. In Canticles iv. 4, the faith
'of the Church, or of believers, whereby they are united

'to Christ, is compared to the Tower of David, whereon 'hung a thousand bucklers, noting how strong and in-'vincible faith is, which furnishes with weapons out of 'Christ's fulness, and abundantly defends from all spi-'ritual enemies.'[1]

St Paul also mentions the *helmet of salvation*, or, as he calls it, in another place, '*the helmet of the hope of salvation*,'[2] that cheerful hope of complete deliverance and eternal happiness, which covers the Christian's head in the day of battle, and gives him a well-grounded confidence, which greatly conduces to his success.*

The *sword of the Spirit*, which is *the word of God*, our blessed Champion has, by his own example, taught us to wield. The more faithfully we use this sword, the stronger and sharper we shall find it, to slay our corruptions, to defend us from the Enemy, and to repel his assaults.

Finally, that we may obtain this spiritual armour, that we may keep it on, and keep it bright, the Apostle exhorts us to *pray always* with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and to *watch* thereunto with all perseverance. These were the guards which our blessed Leader himself commanded us to set. '*Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation.*' And these are the principal means whereby he enables his soldiers to resist the Enemy.

We have a beautiful example of the union of *watching* and *prayer*, in the conduct of Nehemiah and his countrymen, while engaged in the work of rebuilding Jerusalem. They were beset by adversaries, powerful and malignant, who 'conspired all of them together to come

[1] Cruden. [2] 1 Thess. v. 8.

* The above explanations are borrowed chiefly from Doddridge's Family Expositor, and Cruden's Concordance.

and fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.' 'Nevertheless (says Nehemiah), we *made our prayer* unto our God, and *set a watch* against them day and night because of them.' They used every precaution against sudden attacks, the one half working, and the other half holding weapons of war; every builder having his sword girded by his side, and all of them ready to fly to the help of their brethren on the first alarm of the trumpet. Their vigilance was incessant, but their confidence rested not on that, or on any thing else they could do in their own defence. *This* was their ground of confidence, that, in answer to their prayers, *their God would fight for them.*

We have, hitherto, looked chiefly at the *defence* afforded by Christ to his people. We now turn to the *conquests* he achieves for them; and, having considered Christians chiefly in the light of individual soldiers, we are now to consider them as united in one great army. Our Divine Leader, while he attends minutely to the safety of each one of his followers, giving to each a shield, a helmet, and a sword, for his own defence, and enabling each to gain victories over his particular foes; requires them, at the same time, to look beyond their own personal defence and victory, to the general triumph of his cause in the world. He, therefore, gives them *not separate banners*, but *One*, and this *banner* is his *love*. Banners are frequently ornamented with emblematical designs, commemorative of the victories already gained by the army, or its leader. The principal events commemorated on the Gospel-banner are, the Incarnation, Obedience, Death, Resurrection, and Exaltation of the Captain of our salvation. In the centre of this banner, and in colours of more glowing brightness than all the rest, is one emblem, most awful, yet most cheering—

THE CROSS!—A marvellous emblem of victory, the ignominious death of the Leader! In the eyes of the world, a mean and contemptible emblem, but, to the soldiers of Christ, unutterably glorious. One glance at this emblem animates them anew to the combat, rouses them to crucify the flesh, to come out from the world, and manfully to resist the devil; and strengthens their determination to glory in nothing else, saying, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Many and great are the victories already obtained under this banner. Wherever the Cross of Christ has been displayed in its true colours, multitudes have been detached from the service of Satan, and enlisted under the Gospel Standard; and still more glorious are the victories to which it shall conduct in the latter days.

Let us, therefore, study diligently and prayerfully our duties as soldiers of the Cross, and remember the warning given by St Paul to his son Timothy, that good soldiers must endure hardness, and not entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may please Him who hath chosen them to be soldiers. Let us remember that, before we can expect to be honoured as 'fellow-workers' with Christ, in destroying the works of the devil, in the world, we must have the devil's works subdued in our own hearts.

'The Holy Spirit describes the people of God as conquerors, and that they have not only a struggle with that which is evil, but some real *success* in the struggle; not only a fight, but, in some real sense a *victory*. The palm is not awarded to the mere combatant, but to him that overcometh.'[1] Defective as the victory may be, partial as the success, complete only when

[1] Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 26; iii. 5, 12, 21.

'faith is lost in sight, and hope in certainty; yet it is 'true that, even on earth, the believer, through the Spirit 'of God, achieves real mastery over the sin that dwelleth 'in him, real conquest over the power of corruption. 'The love of God, a sense of solemn obligation, and the 'dread of consequences, all of them principles in the new 'nature drawn forth by the indwelling Spirit, lead him 'on to the battle. It is a long and wearisome fight. 'Sometimes he is worsted, and sometimes wounded, 'fainting, cast down, ready to die. Long possession of 'the ground on the part of his enemy, deep cunning, 'and mighty power, all aided and abetted by the great 'mover of the fray, Satan the prince of darkness, make 'the struggle always painful, sometimes dreadful. The 'spirit often sinks at the constant repetition of the same 'contest with the same enemy, at the prospect of having 'the same ground to retread, the same difficulties to re-'conquer. Vantage ground is often given to the foe, 'through supineness, lethargy, unbelief, and want of 'prayer. Distrust of God often weakens the believer, 'on the one hand, and self-trust on the other. In the 'paths of duty he often slips through carelessness. In 'the region of temptation, he often sleeps, through fan-'cied security; and yet, notwithstanding all this, he is, 'on the whole *a conqueror*. Greater is he that is in 'him, than he that is in the world. Christ is the life of 'his soul.[1] God is his God, and dwelleth in him, and 'walketh in him.[2] He is the temple of the Holy Ghost.[3] 'In this is the true secret of his victory. The indwell-'ing Spirit braces the sinews of the new man, and 'strengthens him again and again for the mighty con-'flict. Through this it is, that even the weakest, the

[1] Col. iii. 4. [2] 2 Cor. vi. 16. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 19.

'feeblest, the most tried and tempted of God's people on 'earth, are described as conquerors.'[1]

We must be prepared for public service by personal victories over our pride, ambition, selfishness, and every other evil passion. For want of this preparation, the soldiers of Christ, while fighting in one army, often weaken the cause of their Lord, and strengthen that of his adversary, by envying one another, provoking one another, biting and devouring one another. Let us, then, be on our guard against every thing that would unfit us for joining with our brethren, in the glorious contest to which we are called; not attaching great importance to differences in the form of our weapons, or the colour of our uniform, if we are obviously fighting under the same banner.

We all need to copy the example of the pious builders, lately alluded to. The holier the duty in which we engage, the more need we have to hold the spear in one hand, while we work with the other. And O! that there were such a spirit of union among Christians, as distinguished those pious Jews, each keeping his own place, and attending to his proper work, yet ready to hasten to the relief of his brethren, whenever the trumpet of danger sounds!

Finally, let us all watch and pray, believe and hope, fight in the strength of the Lord, and we shall certainly overcome. For, hear the gracious promises of his word, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.'[2]—'Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.'[3]—'The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.'[4] Let us cherish a lively hope of victory

[1] Evans. [2] 1 Cor. x. 13. [3] James iv. 7. [4] Rom. xvi. 20.

over Satan, sin, and death itself, through Him who shall make us 'more than conquerors.' And, whilst we faithfully use the spiritual armour given us by our Divine Leader, and diligently use every means of defence which he prescribes, let us look, above all these, to his own Almighty arm, and cry, 'Fight, Lord, against them that fight against me; take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for my help. Draw out also the spear, and stop the way against them that persecute me: say unto my soul, I am thy salvation.'

ESSAY XXXV.

SANCTIFICATION—EXAMPLE.

In the course of this work, frequent allusion has been made to the inseparable union of the different parts of salvation, one with another. It has been our earnest endeavour, while tracing separately each individual part, not to lose sight of other parts, but to represent them as 'one harmonious whole.'

The important subject to which our attention is now to be directed, that of Sanctification, has, therefore, been necessarily touched upon in many former Essays. We have seen that it forms an essential branch of salvation;[1] that it invariably attends justification;[2] and, more lately, while viewing Christ as a Refuge,[3] we have seen that he is, to all who truly flee to him, a holy Refuge, a Sanctuary.

We are now, in humble dependance on the blessing of God, to study this part of salvation more directly, and seek to enter into the meaning of the apostle's declaration, that 'Christ Jesus is of God, made unto us Sanctification.' But, first of all, we must inquire what is meant by the term Sanctification?

'To sanctify is to prepare or set apart persons or 'things to a holy use. The saints are sanctified, when,

[1] See Saviour. [2] The Lord our Righteousness. [3] Refuge.

'by the blood of Jesus sprinkled on their conscience, 'to remove the curse, as the source and strength of sin, 'and to purge their hearts from dead works; and, by 'the Holy Ghost entering into them, and gradually re-'moving their corruption, and bestowing on them his 'grace, they are set apart to God's service, and conformed 'to his image.'[1]

'Holiness is assimilation to God,—a restoration, by 'the grace of God, to that Divine image, which by sin 'was utterly destroyed and lost. It includes in it a de-'cided and determining bent of the mind for God, a 'supreme love to his name, a fear of offending him, a 'delight in his ways. It is the effect of faith in Christ 'Jesus our Lord, of that faith which worketh by love, 'which purifieth the affections, and is fruitful in good 'works.

'A saint of God is one whose mind is savingly en-'lightened in the spiritual knowledge of sin, as the great 'evil; of Christ, as the great salvation from it; of God, 'as the great good; nor only this, his heart is led into 'real hatred of sin, into an unfeigned welcome of Christ, 'into a sincere love of God and his ways. This change 'in the understanding and affections, necessarily sancti-'fies the temper and the pursuits, the principles and the 'practice; and he who is the subject of it, lives soberly, 'righteously, and godly in this present world,[2] his con-'duct before others evidencing the reality of the change 'within.'[3]

Let us next inquire into the importance and necessity of this gracious principle, and here again we borrow the comprehensive language of Brown:—'That the holiness 'of our nature and practice is of unspeakable moment, 'appears from its being the end of all the offices of

[1] Brown's Dictionary. [2] Tit. ii. 12. [3] Evans.

'Christ; the end of his debasement and his exaltation; 'the end of the Holy Ghost in his whole work on Christ, 'and on his church; the end of all the precepts, pro- 'mises, and providences; and the end of our election, 'redemption, effectual calling, justification, adoption, 'and spiritual comfort.'[1]

We cannot open the Bible at any part, without perceiving the necessity of Holiness or Sanctification, both of the heart and life.

Inward sanctification is neeessary to our enjoyment of fellowship with God, in whieh all true happiness consists, and necessary as our preparation for heavenly blessedness. The outward acts of holiness, or good works, are not necessary to qualify us for receiving Christ as our Saviour, nor can they procure for us any right to the mercy or favour of God, here or hereafter; but they are absolutely necessary as evidences of our union with Christ, and as tokens of our gratitude to God for his unspeakable benefits and rich grace: they are also necessary to adorn our profession in the eyes of our fellow men, and so to win them to Christ. Nay, the cultivation of holiness, both inward and outward, is our bounden duty, in obedience to the will of our Sovereign and our God.

After these statements of the nature, importance, and necessity of sanctification, or holiness, we may well inquire, *Who is the author of it*, and *from whom may we obtain it?*—God only is holy; he alone is, in his own nature, infinitely holy, and the author of all holiness in angels and in men. So entire is the unity of design and operation, between the sacred Persons of the blessed Trinity, that, while to each is assigned a distinct part, in the great work of man's redemption, the same part is sometimes, in Scripture, ascribed to each individually.

[1] Brown's Dictionary.

Thus while the work of sanctifying the redeemed is generally ascribed to God the Holy Ghost, it is also ascribed to God the Father,[1] and to God the Son.[2] Our present study being the offices of God the Son, it is to His share in the work of sanctification that we are chiefly called to attend.

First, then, Christ Jesus is, in the most comprehensive sense, 'made unto us Sanctification,' in that, by his atonement, righteousness, and intercession, *he has procured, and is authorized to bestow, the gift of the Holy Ghost.*' 'Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth,'[3] and does ever shed forth, those holy influences by which sinners are sanctified, and without which all means of sanctification are ineffectual.

In virtue of his Mediatorial authority, Christ Jesus also dispenses his *Word*, his *Ordinances*, and his *Providence;* all of which are, through his Spirit, powerful *means* of sanctification. But there are two other senses in which he is more directly and personally 'made unto us Sanctification.' These are his *Example*, and his *Love*.

Let us first shortly notice the sanctifying effects of the word of Christ, of his ordinances, and his Providential dealings; and then dwell more particularly on the *Example* of holiness, given us by our Divine Master, and on the *incentives* to holiness, drawn from his wondrous *Love*.

The Word is a most powerful and indispensable means of sanctification. Without it we could never have understood the Providence of God; without it we could not have known either the Example or the Love of Christ. The word is 'the good seed,' which, sown in the heart, and watered by the Spirit, springs up, and bears all the fruits of holiness in the heart and life. 'As, in the first

[1] Jude 1. [2] 1 Cor. i. 2, 30. [3] Acts ii. 33.

'departure from God, the medium of all unholy practice 'was the believing a lie, through the spirit of darkness, 'so, in the sinner's return to God, will it be found that 'the medium of all holy influence is believing the truth 'by the Spirit of God.'[1] By its doctrines and revelations, its precepts and examples, its promises, threatenings, encouragements, and warnings, the word instructs in righteousness, and makes the man of God perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.[2] Jesus himself testified to the sanctifying influence of the word; praying to the Father, on behalf of his people, 'Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.'[3] And the apostle tells us, that one great end for which Christ gave himself for the Church, was 'that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.'[4]

The Ordinances of religion are richly blessed, to carry on the work of sanctification in the people of God, and to begin it in the unconverted. As of old, God appointed his Sabbaths to be a sign between himself and Israel, that he the Lord did sanctify them, so he still appoints his Sabbaths and ordinances, and the secret and social exercises of devotion, as means whereby to sanctify us. By his *Providential dealings*, also, the Lord sanctifies his people, chastening us for our profit, 'that we may be partakers of his holiness.'[5] But we must remember, it is only through 'the Spirit of holiness,' that any of these means become effectual. The Gospel cannot come to us 'in power,' as well as 'in word,' till it comes to us 'in the Holy Ghost;'[6] and no affliction can 'turn to our salvation,' except 'through the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ.'[7]

[1] Evans. [2] 2 Tim. iii. 17. [3] John xvii. 17. [4] Eph. v. 26.
[5] Heb. xii. 10. [6] 1 Thes. i. 5. [7] Philip. i. 19.

We now turn to that powerful and direct means employed by Christ Jesus to effect our sanctification, viz. his own *Example*, the perfect pattern of holiness which he exhibited in his life on earth. 'The example of 'Christ is most proper to form us to holiness, it being 'absolutely perfect, and accommodated to our present 'state. There is no example of a mere man, that is to 'be followed without limitation. "Be ye followers of 'me (says the great apostle), as I am of Christ." But 'the example of Christ is absolutely perfect. His con-'versation was a living law. He was holy, harmless, 'undefiled, and separate from sinners. His example is 'also most accommodated to our present state. The 'Divine nature is the supreme rule of moral perfections, 'for we are commanded to be holy, *as God is holy*. But 'such is the obscurity of our minds, and the weakness 'of our nature, that the pattern was too high and glori-'ous to be expressed by us. And though we had not 'strength to ascend to Him, He had goodness to descend 'to us; and in this present state, and in our nature, to 'set before us a pattern more fitted to our capacity; so 'that the Divine attributes are sweetened in the Son of 'God incarnate; and being united with the graces pro-'per for the human nature, are more perceptible to our 'minds, and more imitable by us.'[1]

With profound reverence, then, and with admiring gratitude, let us approach this heavenly Pattern, and learn holiness by learning Christ. To delineate this Pattern, indeed, is a task which the highest archangel would feel himself unworthy and unable to perform. How then shall a sinful mortal attempt it? Yet, for sinful mortals this Pattern was given; and He who gave it will not despise the humble endeavour, nor withhold

[1] Cruden.

that grace, without which an archangel could not perform it, but through which, a poor mortal may.

A subject so vast, and which has already furnished materials for many excellent volumes, must be very faintly and imperfectly sketched in a single section of a work like this. The points of imitation, in the character of our blessed Lord, are so numerous and varied, that we know not where to begin or end. Numerous and varied as they are, however, they may all be traced to one source,—the all-pervading principle of LOVE; Love to God and to man. This divine Love so filled the heart of Jesus, and the exercise of it so engrossed his time and his energies, as to leave no room for the world, or for self. It rendered his life one continued course of unwearied, indefatigable, self-denying devotion to the glory of God, and the welfare of men; a living model of obedience to the First and Great Commandment, and to the Second, which is like unto it. Innumerable other virtues shone brightly in the Redeemer's character; such as zeal, courage, patience, meekness, forgiveness, self-denial, deadness to the world, spirituality. But these all sprang from Love, as the root; and we find them all traced to this root, by the Apostle Paul, in his description of heavenly Love, or Charity.[1]

Let us consider some of the ways in which the blessed Jesus testified his *Love to God.* He testified this Love, by living *in secret communion* with the Father. We read of his rising up a great while before day, and departing into a solitary place to *pray;* of his spending a whole night in *prayer* to God; and, in the prospect of important duty, or of severe trial, we find him seeking

[1] 1 Cor. xiii.

strength and consolation in secret prayer.[1] He abounded also in *praise;* giving thanks on the receipt of temporal blessings, and on the review of spiritual ones, and on receiving answers to prayer.[2]

The ardent Love of Jesus to his heavenly Father was poured out freely, when engaged in *social prayer* with his disciples.[3]

He was also constant and regular in his attendance on all the *public institutions* of religion,[4] although those institutions were about to give place to the simpler and more spiritual rites of his own appointment. 'His custom was' to attend the synagogue on the Sabbath-day; and he conformed to every appointed ordinance, from his circumcision and baptism, to the Passover which he ate with his disciples, 'the same night in which he was betrayed.'[5] He also testified his love to God's house, by *contributing to the expenses* of the temple, working a miracle for that purpose, though he never did so for the supply of his own wants.[6]

The Love Jesus bore to the Father, was further manifested in his *discourse;* the uniform tendency of which was to show forth the character, will, and perfections of God, to express his own happy enjoyment of fellowship with the Father, and to lead others to enjoy it also. He made (if we may so speak) the most decided *profession* of devotedness to the service of God, from the period of childhood, when he gave that striking epitome of his ensuing life, 'Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?' till that business was 'finished,' by his agonising death. In the highest possible sense, he ac-

[1] Mat. xiv. 23; xxvi. 39; Mark i. 35; Luke vi. 12; John xvii.
[2] Mark xiv. 23; Mat. xi. 25; John xi. 41. [3] Luke ix. 28.
[4] Luke iv. 16. [5] Luke ii. 21; Mat. iii. 13; Luke xxii. 7-14.
[6] Mat. xvii. 25–27; Exod. xxx. 13.

knowledged God in all his ways; openly avowing the Father's will and commandment, as the rule of all his words and actions; declaring that he did nothing of himself, but as the Father had taught him, so he spake, and so he acted.[1]

The *practice* of Jesus corresponded, in the fullest measure, with his profession. He did always those things that pleased the Father, yielding a perfect *obedience* to the whole law, doing God's will, constantly and cheerfully, without the smallest deviation, imperfection, or short-coming.[2]

Zeal for the honour of God was another mark of Love which shone conspicuously in the character of Jesus. Having professed in words that he honoured his Father, he showed in deeds the power of that principle; being raised by it above all personal considerations, above the desire of man's applause, and above the fear of man's rage.[3]

But not in active, zealous service, alone, did the holy Jesus obey the will of his Father in heaven. He obeyed that will, in what is far more difficult, in *lowly submission*, and *patient endurance*. It was his own declaration, 'I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.'[4] In one sense, indeed, the Divine Redeemer did his own will; he offered himself voluntarily to the stupendous work of our Redemption, saying, 'Lo! I come: I delight to do thy will, O my God.'[5] He laid himself a willing sacrifice on the altar of God; and, as the eternal Son, and the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts, he took infinite delight in every part of his work. But we must recollect, that our Surety was Man, as well as God; and that, in as-

[1] John viii. 28. [2] John viii. 29; xv. 10.
[3] John ii. 13–17. [4] John vi. 38. [5] Ps. xl. 7, 8.

suming all the sinless infirmities of our nature, he became as much averse to suffering, for its own sake, as any of us can be. We are apt to lose much of the impression which our Saviour's self-denial ought to produce, by overlooking this truth, that '*Himself took our infirmities.*' Had he not done so, but been shielded by his Divinity from the sense of privation, sorrow, and pain, his sacrifice could not have availed for our pardon; for then he would not have endured our deserved penalty. Bearing in mind, then, the dignity of our Lord's Divine nature, and the tender susceptibility of his Human nature, with what feelings ought we to regard his submission to the Father's will, in contentedly bearing all the evils incident to a poor and despised earthly condition; in taking up his cross daily; in meekly enduring the bitterest calumny and reproach; as it was written of him, 'The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen on me;'—and even at the awful crisis, when the will of the Father required him to drink that cup, the prospect of which agitated his pure frame, and filled his spotless soul with sore amazement and exceeding sorrow;—even in his most intense agony, when horror and dread forced from him the prayer, that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him, calmly subjoining, 'Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt;'[1] drinking the dreadful cup, not only because *it might not pass from him*, but because *it was given him by his Father;* 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'[2]

Words can never do justice to this amazing, this unspeakable Example of submission to the will of God. But it is not in words chiefly, that we are called to show our sense of it. We are called to *imitate* it; for conscience toward God to endure grief, suffering wrongfully;

[1] Mat. xxvi. 39. [2] John xviii. 11.

because Christ also suffered for us, *leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps.*[1]

Confidence in his Father's Love, notwithstanding the severity of his chastisement, was another beautiful feature in the character of Jesus: and in this also, he is our Example. As he, while engaged in the active duties of life, declared his assurance, that the Father left him not alone, but heard him always;[2] and as he, when dying, commended his spirit into the Father's hands;[3] so, living and dying, we are to show our love to God, by confidence in his Love to us; in every danger or trouble committing ourselves to 'him that judgeth righteously.'

When we turn next to the proofs of our blessed Master's *Love to men*, we find them equally rich and varied. He *sympathised* in the feelings of those whom he condescended to call his brethren; rejoicing with them that rejoiced, and weeping with them that wept.[4] He did not, with ostentatious austerity, withdraw from the common intercourse of society, nor even from the festive board:[5] but, whenever he honoured with his presence the social entertainment, it was with these two ends steadily in view, viz, *to do all to the glory of God*, and *to please his neighbour for his good to edification.* In taking encouragement, therefore, from the Example of Christ, to mingle with the world, we must ask ourselves whether we are moved by these considerations, and whether we act upon them: for otherwise, we are perverting the sacred Pattern, to follow our own worldly inclinations. Let us observe the constant watchfulness of Jesus, to draw from every incident, some improving lesson; and then inquire,

[1] 1 Pet. ii. 19–21. [2] John viii. 29; xi. 42. [3] Luke xxiii. 46.
[4] John xi. 35. [5] John ii. 2; Luke xi. 37; v. 29.

whether, according to our measure of talents and opportunities, we are aiming thus to order our conversation.

Again, Jesus showed Love to men, *by the exemplary discharge of all relative duties.* He was a submissive, an affectionate and dutiful Son,[1] a confiding and faithful Friend,[2] an unwearied and merciful Benefactor,[3] a laborious, self-denying, and indefatigable Minister.[4]

Within the little circle of his chosen *friends*, the Love of Christ glowed, with a warmth and tenderness, the best comment on which is the simple narration of his beloved John, from chapter xiii. to xvii. of his Gospel. These chosen companions were treated by him, notwithstanding all their errors, their blindness, and remaining carnality, as his brother, his sister, and his mother. He admitted them to the closest and most endeared intimacy; disclosing to them, as far as they were able to bear, the inmost secrets of his heart; his sorrows, his joys, the wonders of his Person and offices, and the wonderful plan by which sinners are admitted to fellowship with God through him. To each of these, his friends, Jesus gave appropriate counsels, warnings, and encouragements; he exhorted, he comforted, he prayed with and for them; and gently, though faithfully, rebuked their sins. He even stooped to perform for them the humblest offices of kindness; and to this point he called their particular attention, and required their imitation, saying, 'I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.'[5]

But not to his brethren only, did the Lord Jesus manifest his Love. Like the rain, which God sendeth on the just and on the unjust; and like the sun, which he maketh to rise on the evil and the good, the Love of

[1] Luke ii. 51; John xix. 26, 27. [2] John xv. [3] Acts. x. 38.
[4] Mark i. 38. [5] John xiii. 1–15.

Christ to our race diffused itself *universally*,[1] without distinction of characters: not indeed that special Love which he bare to 'his own,'—the world could not have comprehended, and would not have received, that Love,—but the Love of *universal Benevolence*. He fed whole multitudes, healed all that came to him, preached the gospel to the poor, whenever they would hear it. In short, his whole time, except such portions of it as were devoted to secret communion with God, was spent in doing good to the souls and bodies of men. And, universal as his Charity was, he yet attended minutely to the cases of those whom he relieved. His compassion for the widow of Nain was proportioned to the aggravations of her case; this was her only son, and she was a widow.[2] He knew how long the impotent man had been 'in that case,'[3] and that the poor bowed down woman had been so bound for 'eighteen years.'[4] Neither ingratitude, false accusation, nor personal danger ever made the Son of Man slacken his labours of love; he went stedfastly on, rendering good for evil, though the more he loved the less he was loved.

One conspicuous feature in the Love of Christ to men was the *meekness* of his deportment towards them. He condescended to notice little children;[5] he despised not the prayer of the poor and destitute,[6] but was 'gentle, and easy to be entreated,' by the meanest and vilest of mankind. Although he was Holiness itself, he put on no austere aspect of sanctity; he did not say to the greatest sinner, 'Stand by thyself; come not near to me; for I am holier than thou.' On the contrary, he permitted to approach his sacred Person characters who were banished from the society of their fellow sinners;

[1] Luke iv. 40; vi. 19. [2] Luke vii. 12. [3] John v. 6.
[4] Luke xiii. 16. [5] Mark x. 13–16. [6] Matt. xx. 29–34.

graciously accepting their tokens of penitence, condemning them not, but pronouncing their sins forgiven, and exhorting them to sin no more.[1] He was not easily provoked, he vaunted not himself; but, out of Love to perishing souls, he bore all things, and endured all things; all the bitter taunts and revilings that could be cast upon his guiltless head; 'when he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not.'[2]

Tender, sympathising, bountiful, and meek as was the Love of Christ to men, it was not, however, of that morbid kind which suffers sin to pass unreproved, from false tenderness to the sinner. He showed his Love to sinners, *by telling them the truth*, even when his doing so made them count him their enemy.[3] He drew upon himself the hatred of the world, by testifying that the works thereof were evil: and, whereas in all that concerned his personal ease, comfort, or reputation, he was 'the Lamb;' when the honour of his Father, or the cause of truth was concerned, he could also show himself 'the Lion of the tribe of Judah.' He showed his Love to sinners, by exposing the odious nature, and dreadful consequences of sin, by bringing home conviction to their hearts, and urging them to repentance, faith, and obedience. Love to man, as well as Love to God, required that he should severely and unsparingly rebuke the hardened and hypocritical;[4] that, if they themselves refused to hearken, others might take warning and 'flee from the wrath to come.'

Finally, the Lord Jesus gave the highest and most stupendous proof of Love to men, *by laying down for them his precious life;*[5] and by *praying for his murderers.*[6]

[1] Luke vii. 37–50; John viii. 1–11. [2] 1 Peter ii. 23.
[3] John viii. 40; vii. 7. [4] Mat. xxiii; John viii. 38–55.
[5] John xv. 13. [6] Luke xxiii. 34.

He thus, in the most astonishing manner, fulfilled his own precepts. He loved his enemies, blessed them that cursed him, did good to them that hated him, and prayed for them which despitefully used him and persecuted him; and, by the perfection with which he performed all these most difficult duties, proved himself to be, in a sense wherein no other son of man ever was, or can be, 'the Son of the Highest.'[1]

This amazing Love of Christ is adduced by St Paul, as our Example, in various branches of relative duty. After this Example, he exhorts us to be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, to walk in love, to forbear one another, and forgive one another. After the example of Christ he enforces the duties of conjugal affection, of liberality in alms-giving, of indulgence to the infirmities of weak brethren, and careful abstinence from every thing that might cause them to fall.[2]

The test of our abiding in Christ, stated by St John, is awfully strict and searching, '*He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*'[3]

The alternative stated by St Paul is equally awful, '*If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*'[4]

Our admiration of the virtues displayed in the Redeemer's character, is unspeakably heightened, by considering his Divine attributes, in connexion with those virtues. His humility was enhanced by the immensity of his eternal greatness and glory; his meekness by the Almighty power wherewith he could instantaneously have destroyed his tormentors; his self-denial, by the

[1] Mat. v. 44, 45; Luke vi. 35. [2] Eph. iv. 32; v. 2, 22, 23; Col. iii. 13; 1 Cor. viii. 11, 12; 2 Cor. viii. 9; Rom. xv. 1–3.
[3] 1 John ii. 6. [4] Rom. viii. 9.

ease with which he could have gratified his every desire; his love, by the provocation which, as the Holy and the Just God, he had, from the beginning, received from guilty and rebellious man.

Our obligation to imitate those virtues is also the more binding, when we contrast our own situation with that of the Saviour, relatively both to God and man. If He, who was equal with God, was so lowly, patient, submissive, and obedient to the Father; how much more ought we, who are worms of the dust, the dependant creatures of God, to be humbled under his mighty hand, patient under all his dispensations, obedient to all his commands! If He, who had no sins to confess, no evil heart to be sanctified, no corruptions to be cured, was so ardent and diligent in communion with God; how much more ought we, who every moment need pardon, healing, strength, and consolation, to 'continue instant in prayer!' If He, who was the object of the Father's infinite love, endured so patiently the dreadful effects of his wrath; how much more should we endure with patience all the chastisements of our Father, who deserve, in our own persons, far more than he ever inflicts!

Then, in relation to men, if Jesus was so sympathising, compassionate, and benevolent, to those whose nature he condescended, as their Surety, to bear; how much more ought we to sympathise with, and relieve each other, who are all brethren, sharers in one common ruin, except as we are sharers in one common salvation! Again, if He who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, bore so meekly the revilings and false accusations of sinners; surely the recollection of our own offences against God and man ought to make us forbearing, long-suffering, and merciful towards our fellow-sinners! Since

He, who was perfect Holiness, sought out the vicious, that he might reclaim them, surely we ought not to refuse our efforts to rescue our poor fellow-sinners from Satan's yoke ; but, as far as is consistent with the safety of our own souls, should seek out the most abandoned, and endeavour to bring them to repentance. Lastly, if He, who 'was rich,' in inexhaustible, unsearchable riches, 'for our sakes became poor ;' oh ! what are all the sacrifices we, poor, indigent creatures can make, for God, or for each other !

In spite, however, of all the reasons and obligations which bind us to imitate Christ, the first emotion suggested by the contemplation of His character, and the comparison of it with our own, is that of overwhelming shame and sorrow, at the sad contrast presented. Not only do we discover, in our hearts and lives, but faint traces of resemblance to the Pattern which some of us have, for many years, professed to copy ; we also find many things directly opposed to it : nay, we must confess that often we do not even attempt to copy it. We absolutely lose sight of the high Standard held up for our imitation, every thing short of which is sin. We forget that we are called upon and required to surrender all our ease, comfort, interest, property, reputation, nay, our very life itself, if the glory of God, or the good of our brethren demand it ; to live a life of constant self-denying devotion to these united objects ; to be conformed to the spirit, temper, and conduct of Jesus, not only in the daily performance of ordinary duties, but in that amazing act of Love, his laying down his life for his brethren.[1]

If to be a *saint* is to be conformed to the likeness of

[1] 1 John iii. 16.

Him who was Sanctification personified, oh! who amongst us are saints? Some of us, perhaps, are far from desiring the appellation, deeming it rather a term of ridicule or reproach. Or, if we respect the character it denotes, we are yet perhaps contented to admire it in others, especially in those who have departed this life, viewing it as the attainment of but a few, and not to be expected of Christians in general. But if we are not *saints*, not *sanctified ones*, what are we? Not the people of God certainly, but his enemies. Let us remember the frequent use of the term *saints* throughout the Scriptures. The Israelites were called 'an holy nation,' the people of the Lord who 'sanctified them;'[1] in the Book of Psalms, the godly are frequently distinguished by the name of 'saints;'[2] and in St Paul's Epistles, Christians are generally described under this name, which, if it does not imply that all to whom he wrote were saints indeed, implies, at least, that all Christians profess, and ought to be such.[3]

Alas! how contrary to the Example here set before us is the course of this world! How do ungodliness and wickedness, pride and selfishness, malice, revenge, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, and the like, abound in this nominally Christian land! And even among the true followers of Christ, how rarely do we see any that manifestly resemble him in mind and conduct! A few such have appeared; but they have been wonders in their own and succeeding generations, putting to shame the low attainments of ordinary Christians, by showing what it is possible for grace to effect in the life and soul of man.

[1] Lev. xxi. 23. [2] Ps. xvi. 3; xxxi. 23; xxxvii. 28.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 2; Eph. i. 1; iii. 8.

'There are some individuals with whom one can 'scarcely ever have any intercourse, but one seems to 'discern something of their blessed Master in them,— 'something of his meekness, humility, and love,—some- 'thing of his self-denial, patience, submission,—some- 'thing of his purity, courage, and zeal, and holy confidence 'in God. There are some with whom we seldom mingle 'as we pass through life's pilgrimage, but we are ready 'to say of them, This is a man of God, a man of prayer, 'a man of holiness; I know with whom he has lately 'been. He has been at a throne of grace, he has been 'with God, and the savour of his name is upon him. 'Can we describe the weight, the influence, the moral 'importance which such an individual possesses? Impos- 'sible! his counsel and advice, his admonitions, his 'cautions, his encouragements, above all, his example 'and his prayers, are so many channels through which 'a gracious God conveys unutterable blessings to our 'souls.'[1]

If, as we have seen, sanctification, or conformity to Christ, mainly consists in love to God and man pervading the whole heart and conduct; oh! how rare a thing is sanctification! How lamentably does selfishness contract all our hearts! How much of self-pleasing remains even in the regenerate! Brethren, let us not deceive ourselves. We may, for years, have maintained a religious profession; we may have embraced evangelical sentiments, and attained to considerable knowledge in the mysteries of the Gospel; we may have lost our relish for the vanities of the world, and engaged in many useful and excellent pursuits; our tastes and enjoyments may have become, in some measure, spiritual; and yet, with all this, experience and conscience may tell us

[1] Evans.

that we have very little love, self-denial, or humility. We may be *pleasing ourselves* as much, while indulging our new tastes, and following our new pursuits, as we did formerly in our old tastes and pursuits. It is easy and pleasant to go on in the way of duty, when nothing opposes our inclinations; but let God afflict, let Providence appoint some irksome duty, let man provoke, or return evil for good, and then it will be seen whether *that mind is in us which was also in Christ Jesus.*

Let us now inquire, if there be any motive strong enough to constrain our naturally selfish and unholy minds, to imitate this perfect Model of love and holiness? Yes, there is *one motive*, and but one, that can do it,—that to which we alluded in the early part of this Essay, as *the second direct means whereby Christ Jesus is made unto us Sanctification;* namely, *the sense of his amazing Love in our redemption.*

The power of an example depends greatly on attachment to the person who sets it. We are prone to imitate even the failings of those whom we tenderly love, or to whom we are deeply indebted. What love, then, and what debt of gratitude, can compare with those we owe to Christ? Surely we ought to be moved, by a sense of them, to transcribe into our own character every line and lineament of his. And here is no danger of excess, for 'in him was no fault at all.'

This was the argument used by the Apostles, and found effectual, in their own experience, for the promotion of sanctification, the constraining Love of Christ in dying for sinners. It was 'by the mercies of God,' in the salvation wrought by Christ, that Paul besought the Romans to present their bodies 'a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God;' not to be conformed to this

world, but transformed by the renewing of their mind.[1] It was by the promises of communion with God in Christ, and adoption into his family, that he urged the Corinthians to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and to perfect holiness in the fear of God.[2] It was because the Corinthians knew they were bought with a price, that the Apostle required them to glorify God in their bodies and in their spirits, which were God's.[3] And it was the lively assurance St Paul himself possessed that the Son of God *loved him, and gave himself for him*, which animated him to live unto God, to live as having Christ living in him, to be dead to the law, and crucified with Christ.[4]

It is this personal appropriation of redeeming Love that operates most powerfully in promoting our sanctification. The richest blessings conferred on others, move us little, unless we ourselves are partakers of them. Would we then grow in holiness, we must grow in appropriating faith. Would we know Jesus as our Sanctification, we must know him as our Redemption and our Righteousness, and enjoy, in our own experience, the wonders of his Love. Yet, let us always remember, that neither the Example, nor the Love of Christ, have power to sanctify us, unless they are applied by the Spirit of Christ. It is only 'by the Lord the Spirit,' that we are enabled so to behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, as to be changed into the same image.[5] It is only when the love of God is 'shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost,' that it becomes an efficacious principle.

If, then, we have any ambition to be 'vessels of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use,' let us

[1] Rom. xii. 1, 2. [2] 2 Cor. vi. 16–18; vii. 1. [3] 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.
[4] Gal. ii. 20. [5] 2 Cor. iii. 18.

pray more fervently and constantly for that blessed Spirit who is promised to all that ask. Let us continually wait for and expect his influences, avoid every thing that has a tendency to quench his godly motions, and with holy ambition desire to be 'filled with the Spirit.'

We often hear believers deploring their slow progress in holiness, complaining of their unbelief, lukewarmness, inconsistencies, &c.: but many of them appear satisfied with acknowledging these things, and seem to bestow little pains to conquer their besetting sins, and to grow in grace, as if higher attainments were beyond their reach.

'Many complain of their want of growth, and they 'have reason. *They do not grow;* and the cause is here: 'They forget that, "laying aside every weight," is an in- 'dispensable requisite for running this race set before us. 'We must put off the old man, before we can put on 'the new.'[1]

'If you thrive not in grace and holiness, if you go not 'from strength to strength, it is ordinarily from sinful 'negligence, love of the world, and indulgence of sin. 'You may repose in a mere conviction of safety, and 'turn it into an occasion of inactivity, instead of aspir- 'ing after all that God has promised. You may indo- 'lently recline upon the invincible operation of the Holy 'Spirit, forgetting that his mode of administering his 'own blessings is in his own way, that is, in the dili- 'gent, prayerful use of all the means which he has him- 'self appointed.

'Seek, then, O seek the inestimable mercy. Stop not 'short of the promised blessing. Rest not in mere de- 'sires. Be not as the sluggard, that desireth and hath 'nothing. See all sanctification in Christ, and there 'seek it; not only see it in him, but seek it from him.

[1] Eph. iv. 22–24.

'He has it to bestow, yea, in order to bestow. Seek to 'grow *inwardly*,[1] into Christ in all things; *outwardly*, 'in good works, before the world;'[2] *downwards*, in a 'deeper humility;'[3] *upwards*, in all holy conversation 'and godliness.'[4]

We may ascertain whether holiness be, in any measure, our *attainment*, by examining whether it is our *element*. Do we delight in holy occupations, in holy society, and holy conversation? Do we feel regret at the close of holy exercises and ordinances, a regret which we can only solace by the reflection, that in the temple above we shall 'go no more out?' Or is it, rather, a relief to us when the Sabbath or the Communion season is over, or when the conversation returns to the topics of earth? In short, are we most *in our element* when engaged in spiritual or in temporal concerns?

The same point may be also ascertained by examining our feelings with regard to heavenly bliss. What is it that excites our most ardent longings and brightest hopes in the anticipation of heaven? Is it that we shall be for ever delivered from trouble, and sorrow, and care, and re-united to beloved relatives and friends? These, doubtless, are lawful and worthy objects of hope. But, to the saints, heaven presents nobler and sweeter prospects still; even freedom from every motion of sin, and from all association with sinners, the company of all holy men and holy angels, and, above all, the full enjoyment of the thrice Holy Lord God, and the sight of *Jesus as he is*.

In proportion as this hope is in us, the hope of being made like Jesus, and seeing him as he is, we shall *purify ourselves, even as he is pure*.

[1] Eph. iv. 15. [2] Philip. i. 9–11. [3] 1 Pet. v. 5, 6.
[4] 1 Pet. i. 15. Evans.

ESSAY XXXVI.

WISDOM—COUNSELLOR.

In order to understand the meaning of the Apostle when he declares that Christ Jesus is of God made unto us wisdom,[1] two things are necessary; 1st, To ascertain the Scriptural sense of the term wisdom; and, 2d, To ascertain how Christ becomes that Wisdom to us, or what connexion there exists between Christ and our acquisition of wisdom.

The word wisdom has various significations in Scripture.

1. 'It means that prudence and discretion, which 'enables men to perceive what is fit to be done, accord-'ing to the circumstances of time, place, persons, man-'ner, and end of doing. "I saw that wisdom excelleth 'folly, as far as light excelleth darkness. The wise 'man's eyes are in his head," &c.[2] The wise man has 'the use of his eyes and reason, he sees his way, and 'orders all his affairs with discretion; he foresees, and 'so avoids many dangers and mischiefs. *Knowledge* 'directs a man what is to be done, and what is not to

[1] 1 Cor. i. 30. [2] Eccles. ii. 13, 14.

'be done; but *Wisdom* directs him how to do all things 'duly, conveniently, and fitly. It was this sort of wis-'dom especially that Solomon entreated of God with so 'much earnestness, and which God granted him with 'great liberality.[1]

II. 'Wisdom is taken for quickness of invention, and 'dexterity in the execution of several works, which re-'quire not so much strength of body, as industry and 'labour of the mind; as God told Moses that he had 'filled with wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, 'Bezaleel and Aholiab, to invent and perform several 'sorts of work for completing the tabernacle.[2]

III. 'Wisdom is used for craft, cunning, and strata-'gem, and that whether good or evil. "Come on (said 'Pharaoh) let us deal wisely with the Israelites."[3] Let 'us fall upon some stratagem, whereby we may exhaust 'both their wealth and their strength.

IV. 'Wisdom is taken for doctrine, learning, and ex-'perience. "With the ancient is wisdom."[4] And where 'it is said of Moses, that "he was learned in all the wis-'dom of the Egyptians;"[5] he was instructed in the 'knowledge of those arts and sciences, for which, in 'those times, the Egyptians were famous.

V. 'Wisdom is taken for true piety, or the fear of 'God, which is spiritual wisdom. "The fear of the 'Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and the knowledge 'of the Holy is understanding."[6] The fear of the Lord,

[1] 1 Kings iii. 9, 12, 28. [2] Ex. xxxi. 2, 3. [3] Ex. i. 10.
[4] Job. xii. 12. [5] Acts vii. 22. [6] Prov. ix. 10.

'that is wisdom; and to depart from evil, is understand-'ing.[1]

This last it is which truly and pre-eminently deserves the name of *wisdom*, and is generally meant by the term in Scripture. Other kinds of wisdom may be purchased too dearly, and may leave the possessor foolish and miserable, blind and poor, for ever. This wisdom alone is above all price, and insures to the possessor 'riches and honour, yea, durable riches and righteousness.' Its fruit is 'better than fine gold; and its revenue than choice silver;' it is 'better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.'[2]

The first definition of wisdom given above is true, in the highest sense, of *spiritual* wisdom. This alone teaches us what is fit to be done, according to the *circumstances* wherein we stand, as guilty and helpless, yet responsible creatures; as dying, yet immortal beings, liable to be summoned, we know not how soon or how suddenly, to that awful tribunal which will fix our everlasting state. This wisdom alone can teach us how to act, according to the *circumstances of time, place, and persons*, wherewith we have to do in our present transitory, but most momentous existence; according to the *end* we ought to have supremely in view, our own *salvation*, and the *manner of attaining that end, through Christ.*

If escape from eternal misery, and the attainment of eternal bliss, be the *end* most worthy of an immortal being to pursue; and if Jesus Christ be not only the *best*, but the *only Way* to attain that end; surely he alone is *wise* who pursues that *best end by that best and only*

[1] Job xxviii. 28; Cruden. [2] Prov. viii. 18, 19, 11.

Way: and they are ruinously foolish, who neglect to pursue that end, or who pursue it in ways contrary to that which the God of wisdom has revealed.

In the course of this Essay, we shall collect from Scripture many particulars descriptive of heavenly wisdom. But first, let us examine the point to which our subject mainly tends, viz. *in what sense Christ Jesus is of God made unto us Wisdom.*

We have seen in a former Essay,[1] that the Son is, in his essential nature, the uncreated Wisdom, the eternal Word; that divine Wisdom by which God established the heavens, and founded the earth; of whom Solomon discourses so largely and profoundly in the 8th chapter of Proverbs. But how is the Son made unto us Wisdom? It might seem more correct to ascribe the wisdom given us to the 'Father of lights,' from whom cometh every good and perfect gift; or to the Holy Ghost, 'the Spirit of wisdom and revelation.' Nevertheless, St Paul ascribes it to the Son; and a little examination will prove the agreement of this ascription with other parts of Holy Writ. Besides the general declarations, that '*all things* are delivered unto the Son of the Father;'—'that it pleased the Father that in him should *all* fulness dwell;'—'that out of his fulness all we have received;'—in which general terms, the grace of *wisdom* is of course included with all other graces;—we have more express authority for ascribing to our blessed Lord and Saviour the gift of wisdom, in that he was anointed for his Mediatorial office with 'the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.'[2] And we know that the gifts of the Spirit rested, and do rest, upon him,

[1] See, The Word, or Wisdom of God. [2] Is. xi. 2, 3.

not only to qualify him for his personal work as our Surety, but that he may give gifts unto men.[1]

We have our Lord's own authority for ascribing to him the gift of wisdom. He declared, while on earth, his power to bestow both the wisdom which teaches the knowledge of God, and that which directs us in the path of duty; the former in that saying, 'No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him;'[2] the latter, by promising to give his Apostles a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries should not be able to gainsay nor resist.[3]

Having now attempted to prove from Scripture, that Christ Jesus is of God made unto us Wisdom, we are next to inquire, *In what respects he is so made;* or, in other words, *How does Christ communicate to us wisdom?* In two ways principally, 1st, By making us wise unto salvation; 2d, By giving us that wisdom which is profitable to direct.

First, then, Christ Jesus becomes our Wisdom, by making us '*wise unto salvation.*' This he does, when, by his Spirit accompanying his word, and by the gift of faith, of which he is the Author and Finisher, he enables us to choose as *our* wisdom, that which is the wisdom of God, even that most wise contrivance and counsel of God concerning the salvation of men by Christ crucified, which, though to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness, is, unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the Power of God, and the Wisdom of God.[4] In '*the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*' (or in that mysterious and blessed covenant between the Persons of the Sacred Trinity

[1] Ps. lxviii. 18; Eph. iv. 8.
[2] Mat. xi. 27.
[3] Luke xxi. 15.
[4] 1 Cor. i. 18–31.

for the salvation of men, by the anointing of the Son to be their Saviour), 'are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.'[1] Now, Christ Jesus is 'made unto us Wisdom,' when, by his grace, we are led to renounce all other hopes of acceptance with God, but those which flow from his Cross, and humbly and gratefully to receive salvation as a free gift. The man who has attained this wisdom is truly wise, whatever else he may be ignorant of; whereas, all who have it not are fools, however great may be their attainments in the wisdom of this world. Indeed, this world's wisdom, far from aiding us in the acquisition of spiritual wisdom, must be renounced ere we can learn the first lesson in it. 'If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise; for the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.'[2]

Thus we see that every man who seeks and finds salvation by Christ *is savingly wise*. But this is not all that is desirable for believers, nor all that Christ Jesus has in store for them.

For, *secondly*, he is 'made unto us Wisdom,' by giving us *the wisdom that is profitable to direct*, in every duty towards God, our neighbour, and ourselves.

The prayers of St Paul, for his converts, furnish beautiful models for our aspirations, in behalf of ourselves and others, with regard to spiritual wisdom. When he heard of their faith and love, he was filled with the most fervent gratitude, and acknowledged them as saints, and faithful brethren; of whose salvation he entertained no doubt. Yet this did not satisfy the Apostle. He prayed incessantly for them, that they might be '*filled with*

[1] Col. ii. 2, 3. [2] 1 Cor. iii. 18, 19.

the knowledge of God's will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;' that they might '*increase in the knowledge of God;*'[1] that their love might abound yet more and more, *in knowledge and in all judgment:*'[2] that their pious affections, being guided by sound discretion and prudence, might bring forth the richest harvest of those 'fruits of righteousness, which are, by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God.'

One of the sad effects of the Fall is, that sin has blinded our understandings. 'We grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon-day, as in the night.'—'It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.' But it is one of the blessed provisions of the Gospel, that Christ Jesus is appointed our COUNSELLOR,[3] to enlighten our dark understandings, and to guide our erring footsteps.

One grand means which he employs for this end is his written *Word*, which is 'a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.' Let us, then, humbly and gratefully make use of this sacred lamp, imploring, at the same time, the light of the Spirit of truth, which the Saviour has promised. We are warned in Scripture, that wisdom is not to be gained without labour and perseverance. Although 'the Lord giveth wisdom,' as a free gift, yet he gives it to those only whom he inspires with ardent desires for it, and whom he makes willing to toil for it. 'Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding: if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.'

Let us, therefore, both cry unto the Lord for wisdom, and dig for it in the sacred mine of Scripture. We find,

[1] Col. i. 9, 10. [2] Philip i. 9. [3] Isaiah ix. 6.

in the Bible, many very comprehensive definitions of wisdom, such as those already alluded to, 'the knowledge of the Holy,'—'the fear of the Lord,' and 'to depart from evil.' These general definitions abundantly prove, that in Christ Jesus alone, we can be truly wise: for no man can rightly *know the Holy One*, *fear God*, or *depart from evil*, unless he be, in Christ, reconciled, justified, adopted, and sanctified.

Our Divine Counsellor, however, does not limit his instructions to general directions. With condescending minuteness, he points out the various marks and evidences, the effects and advantages, of wisdom, and the means necessary for its cultivation.

Wisdom begins in the inward parts, where it produces purity, peace, a humble distrust of our own judgment, and child-like docility in seeking knowledge from God and from our brethren.[1]

It teaches both to 'refrain the lips,' when expedient, and to open them 'as the well-spring of wisdom, and as a flowing brook,' when opportunity offers.[2]

It qualifies for mutual edification: for the wise man 'receives reproof,' and loves them that rebuke him: while, in his turn, he becomes 'a wise reprover,' and his words make deep and lasting impressions, 'as goads and as nails,' sticking fast in the conscience.[3]

It makes men 'well advised,' prudent and discreet in conduct; for 'wisdom is profitable to direct.' It teaches them to 'walk circumspectly,' and to 'redeem the time;' to improve present opportunities, as 'the wise son, who gathereth in summer,' and as the unjust steward, who 'did wisely.'[4]

[1] Ps. li. 6; Prov. xviii. 15; James iii. 17.

[2] Prov. x. 19; xviii. 4. [3] Prov. ix. 8; xxv. 12; Eccles. xii. 11.

[4] Prov. xiii. 10; Eccles. x. 10; Eph. v. 15, 16; Prov. x. 5.

It teaches the proper line of conduct, towards men of all descriptions; how to walk 'towards those that are without;' avoiding needless offence, yet not compromising principle; to be 'wise as serpents,' when in the midst of wolves; and, though in malice to be children, in understanding to be men.[1]

Wisdom makes men watchful and faithful in duty; as those virgins who had oil in their vessels, and so were ready to go forth and meet the bridegroom, or, as the wise and faithful servant, who, not knowing what hour his Lord would come, was found diligently employed in his service.[2]

Wisdom reminds men of the shortness and uncertainty of their sojourn on earth; and makes them so to consider their latter end, as carefully to prepare for it.[3]

The noblest exercise of wisdom is that of 'winning souls.'[4] This wisdom was vouchsafed, in abundant measure, to the Apostle Paul, and gratefully acknowledged by him, as received not from man, but from the Holy Ghost. 'Being crafty,' he says, he caught many souls with his blessed 'guile.'

Innumerable are the characteristics of this grace, to be found in Scripture. But we must close our selection of them, with the full and beautiful description of heavenly wisdom given by St James: 'The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.'[5]

When we look around us in the world, and listen to the common opinions of men, it is but too evident,

[1] Mat. x, 16; 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
[2] Matt. xxv. 4; xxiv. 45.
[3] Deut. xxxii. 29; Ps. xc. 12.
[4] Dan. xii. 3; Prov. xi. 30.
[5] James iii. 17.

that while all other kinds of wisdom receive their due meed of praise, *that* wisdom alone is despised which makes men 'wise unto salvation,' and teaches them how to walk in the road to heaven. The reason is obvious: the maxims and arguments of heavenly wisdom are directly opposed to the tastes and desires of the natural man, and to the course of this world. Compare St James's definition of wisdom, with the prevailing sentiments of mankind; and you will find, that really to practise this wisdom exposes a man to the charge of folly, however wise he may, in other respects, be considered. 'The Day,' the Day of Judgment, 'shall declare,' who, amongst us, has been wise, and who has been foolish, during this our seed-time for eternity. But even without looking beyond 'the life that now is,' wisdom, like *godliness*, 'is profitable for all things.' Let us therefore consider next, some of the *advantages* of wisdom, described in Scripture.

It gives sweet peace and serenity within, which is to the soul as honey to the taste: it keeps it calm and composed, amid outward changes and perils; so that the believer 'can lie down and not be afraid; yea, he shall lie down, and his sleep shall be sweet,' undisturbed by over-anxiety or sudden fear.[1]

It gives a lovely consistency and gracefulness to the character; as an ornament of grace unto the head, and chains about the neck.[2]

It enables the believer to run in the ways of godliness, without stumbling, and with happy freedom.[3]

It is valuable both in prosperity and adversity; for 'wisdom is good with an inheritance,' teaching the right use and the true enjoyment of temporal blessings: while

[1] Prov. iii. 24; xxiv. 13, 14. [2] Prov. i. 9.
[3] Prov. iv. 12.

it also inclines the heart to visit 'the house of mourning,' as more profitable than 'the house of feasting.'[1]

It imparts an understanding of the 'ways of God,' of 'the loving kindness of the Lord.'[2]

'Wisdom is a defence,' 'better than weapons of war,' against all sorts of attacks.[3]

'Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.'[4]

Such are some of the advantages, resulting from true wisdom, in the present life. But who can utter, or conceive, the advantages which shall result from it hereafter? 'The wise shall inherit glory!' When they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake,—they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that have used their wisdom in turning many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever.[5]

How many false estimates of wisdom will *that Day* discover! The simple, unlettered Christian, who knew little but his Bible, and who, for his conscientious endeavour to walk by its rules, was deemed weakly scrupulous, foolishly negligent of his own interest, a well-meaning enthusiast, will then be pronounced *wise* before the assembled universe. Although, while on earth, he saw through a glass darkly; he shall then see face to face, and know even as he is known: yea, and be ever growing in heavenly wisdom, throughout a blessed eternity.—While, on the other hand, many whom the world esteemed wise, the prudent man of business, who laboured indefatigably to increase his gains, and whose success was admired and envied, the politic statesman, the renowned philosopher, the man of highest attainments in science

[1] Eccles. vii. 2, 4, 11. [2] Ps. cvii. 43. [3] Eccles. ix. 18.
[4] Prov. iii. 17. [5] Prov. iii. 35; Dan. xii. 2, 3.

and literature; all these, if destitute of heavenly wisdom, will be proved utter fools, and vainly lament their own folly, world without end.

It matters not what be the object that is pursued, to the neglect of Christ, and salvation through him; be it riches, pleasure, honour, or human learning, it is folly, egregious folly. The philosopher can carry out of this world as little of his science, as the rich man can of his gold. Both will be found to have made the falsest calculations of 'the chief end of man;' and, for the sake of a few empty bubbles, to have cast away substantial and glorious realities. And well would it be for them, were their loss but a negative one. But, alas! this is far from the worst of their case.

If men will not be allured by the joys of Heaven, we would try to alarm them by the terrors of Hell; and ask those who now find their highest enjoyment in the charms of literature, and the fascinations of refined society, how they will endure to be associated with all the most brutal, and gross, and ignorant of the human race; who, however they may have differed from them here, in many respects, resembled them in this decisive point, that '*they rejected the counsel of God against themselves.*' The superior talents and wisdom of the ungodly philosopher will then serve only to aggravate his misery, and deepen his condemnation; and if he has not learned to know Christ crucified, he must be classed among the 'fools,' who 'die for want of wisdom.'[1]

But, turning from the consideration of this fatal folly, we must lament also that, even among those who seem *wise unto salvation*, there often appears a great lack of the *wisdom that is profitable to direct.* The saying of our Lord Jesus still holds good; 'The children of this world

[1] Prov. x. 21.

are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light.' Christians do not exercise half the diligence, self-denial, prudence, and perseverance, in pursuit of their enduring portion, that the men of the world exercise in pursuit of their perishing vanities. Having ascertained the right means, whereby to procure heavenly blessings, and even after having proved their efficacy, they yet are guilty of most culpable negligence in the use of these means. Hence they advance but slowly in the acquisition of wisdom. They remain long in partial ignorance; ever learning, yet not coming to a full knowledge of the truth; and they commit many errors and mistakes in practice, which cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of. Great allowance must, doubtless, be made for different degrees of natural discretion and judgment; but still, these errors may be traced, in a great measure, to neglect of the *means* appointed by God for obtaining spiritual wisdom. These are, *prayer*, the *study of Scripture*, *keeping company with the wise*, a *willingness to hear reproof*, and *waiting for the teaching of the Spirit*.

Let us then be stirred up to a more diligent use of these means. In believing *prayer*, let us ask of God that wisdom we so greatly lack, not doubting but that he will give it liberally, and without upbraiding.[1]

Let the *word of Christ* dwell in us richly, in all wisdom, that we may wisely admonish ourselves and one another.[2] Let us, as much as in our power, '*walk with wise men*,'[3] and be willing to *hear their rebukes*.[4]

Above all, let us listen to Him who is 'of God made unto us Wisdom,' when he cries, 'Turn ye at my reproof: behold, I will pour out *my Spirit* unto you, I will make known my words unto you.'[5]

[1] James i. 5, 6. [2] Col. iii. 16. [3] Prov. xiii. 20.
[4] Eccles. vii. 5. [5] Prov. i 23.

And may this be the language of each of our hearts,—'Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes, and I shall keep it unto the end. Teach me good judgment and knowledge; for I have believed thy commandments. I am thy servant: give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies. For the entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple.'

ESSAY XXXVII.

THE CONSOLATION OF ISRAEL.

All consolation, for the people of God, comes from Immanuel. The Father is, indeed, 'the God of consolation,' the 'God of all comfort;' and the Holy Ghost is 'the Comforter.' But it is only in and by Christ, by the grounds of consolation drawn from his Person, Work, and Offices, that either the Father or the Holy Ghost give comfort to sinners.

'The Consolation of Israel' was one of those delightful characters, under which Messiah was revealed to the ancient Church. In this character, he was made known to the Patriarchal Church, by the typical name of Noah, which signifies *Repose*, *Rest*, *Consolation*. When calling his son Noah, Lamech said, 'This same shall comfort us, concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed.'[1] Here, then, was pre-figured, though obscurely, the coming of Him who was to comfort the people of God, under all the sad effects of the Lord's curse, inflicted at the Fall.

This event was the grand theme of consolation, wherewith the Prophets comforted the people of God, under

[1] Gen. v. 29.

all the sad tidings they had to deliver to them. Isaiah, in particular, was the honoured messenger of rich and abundant consolation to Israel. From the opening of the 40th chapter, with these soothing words, 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God,' to the close of the Book, this Prophecy is almost an uninterrupted strain of consolation; all drawn from one source,—the prospect of Messiah's coming, to redeem his people, and establish his kingdom of righteousness and peace. Temporal deliverances of the Jewish nation were, no doubt, the subject of many of the promises in this Book; but these seem almost lost sight of, in the eternal and glorious deliverance, promised to the true Israel, in all ages.

It was by the coming of an Almighty Redeemer, that Jehovah promised to comfort Zion,[1] to comfort all her waste places, to make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord. So clearly was The Consolation of Israel revealed to this highly-honoured Prophet, that, by the eye of faith, he beheld him as already come; devoutly exclaiming, 'Sing, O heavens; and be joyful, O earth; and break forth into singing, O mountains: for the Lord *hath comforted* his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted.'[2] And, that no doubt might remain, as to the Agent whereby God was about to comfort his people, the words of consolation are, in the 61st chapter, put into the mouth of Messiah himself. He becomes the speaker, and thus announces his blessed office of Comforter; 'The Lord hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.'[3]

[1] Is. li. 3. [2] Is. xlix. 13. [3] Is. lxi. 1–3.

In firm reliance on the faithfulness of God to his promises, the venerable Simeon, and other pious Jews, waited for Christ, as for The Consolation of Israel,[1] as for Him who was to comfort them, under all their troubles, temporal and spiritual. And most truly did Jesus perform the office of Comforter, during his earthly sojourn. He pronounced a blessing on mourners,[2] promising that they should be comforted. He explicitly claimed the office of Comforter, assigned to Messiah,[3] by appropriating the declaration quoted above.[4] And his constant delight was to comfort the afflicted, whether 'in mind, body, or estate.' He spake pardon and peace to the penitent, encouraged the fearful, supplied the wants of the needy, healed the sick, and sympathised, in the tenderest manner, with the bereaved, often restoring their dead to life.

Most of these consolatory acts, Jesus performed towards the people indiscriminately; but, as they were 'not all Israel, which were of Israel,' the most part were not prepared to receive his best consolations. These were enjoyed only by the faithful few, who looked to him for *spiritual* comfort. To such, his words of consolation were tender, beyond those of all human comforters. They were generally few, but most emphatic and comprehensive; such as, 'Daughter, be of good comfort;'—'Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace;'—'Be not afraid, only believe;'—'Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.'[5]

We have, however, one specimen of our Lord's consolatory addresses, of considerable length, in the 14th,

[1] Luke ii. 25. [2] Mat. v. 4.
[3] Luke iv. 16–21. [4] Is. lxi. 1–3.
[5] Mat. ix. 22; Luke vii. 50; Mark v. 36; Luke xii. 32

15th, and 16th chapters of the gospel by John, which, while it shows how tenderly he performed the office of Consoler to his people, during his personal ministry, shows also the manner in which he continues to perform it, since his return to heaven.

How solid, how suitable, and rich were the consolations given by the Redeemer to his followers, in that blessed discourse! He knew that sorrow had filled their hearts at the prospect of his departure, and of the sufferings that awaited them for his sake. Nor did he contradict their well-grounded apprehensions; but he administered such cordials as were fitted to revive their drooping spirits, and counterbalance all their griefs. As the crowning and paramount consolation, he gave them the blessed assurance of admission to those heavenly mansions which, by his death, resurrection, and ascension, he was going to prepare for them. But, knowing they would need present comforts, while waiting for future bliss, he promised them many rich and precious blessings, during their abode on earth. The chief of these were, access to the Father, through himself, as the Way; assurance of God's favour; union and communion with the Father and the Son; friendship with himself, of the tenderest and most confidential nature; peace and harmony among themselves; joy, yea a fulness of joy; and, although they must endure much tribulation from the hatred of the world, they should take comfort from the reflection, that they were thereby conformed to him, their Lord and Master; and that this was an evidence of his having chosen them out of the world. They must, indeed, for a season, weep and lament; but their mourning should soon be turned to joy, at the glorious results of his work of Redemption.

But the grand subject of this discourse was the pro-

mise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter. Till then, Jesus had comforted his disciples in his own person. But now, when he was about to depart, he promised them 'another Comforter,' whose abiding consolations should more than compensate for the loss of his bodily presence. This Comforter could not come to them unless he went away; for it was only by his sacrifice, and his mediation grounded upon it, that the influences of the Holy Ghost could be procured for sinners.

No doubt, believers enjoyed the enlightening, sanctifying, and comforting influences of the Spirit, before the coming of Christ. Yet they enjoyed them in virtue of his anticipated sacrifice; and, after the actual offering up of the Lamb, the gifts of the Holy Ghost were poured out in much greater abundance and efficacy.

The entire union of operation between the sacred Persons of the Trinity, is beautifully displayed in the varied terms wherein the promise of the Comforter is given in these chapters. At one time Jesus *himself* promises to *send* him, 'If I depart, I will send him unto you.' At another, he says *the Father will send him*, in his name; and yet he promises, as if *in his own person*, still to be their Comforter, 'I will not leave you comfortless, *I* will come unto you.' From these variations in the terms of the promise, we may conclude that it is through the agency of the Holy Ghost, that Christ, since his ascension, comforts his Israel; yet that the union of the Godhead is so close, that, through the Spirit's indwelling, the Father and the Son also come and abide in believers, and comfort them. This is a mystery, incomprehensible by our understandings; but, blessed be God, not unknown to our hearts.

In the history and writings of our Lord's immediate followers, we see how fully those promises were verified.

They received such abundant consolation, under their fiery trials, as enabled them to 'glory in tribulation;' to rejoice that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ; to count the sufferings of this present time, not worthy to be compared with the glory that should be revealed in them?[1]

We have, in the experience of St Paul, the strongest possible evidence of the power of Divine consolations. His labours, persecutions, and sufferings, exceeded those of most men that ever lived. See his own account of them in 2 Cor. xi. 23–28. Yet hear his grateful acknowledgment, 'Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.'[2]

It may indeed be truly observed, that the sufferings of St Paul, like those of other martyrs, being endured more directly for the cause of Christ, and of righteousness, drew down upon the sufferer a larger measure of the consolations of the Gospel than can be expected in the common trials of life. Such sufferers have special promises, both of exalted reward in heaven, and of abundant consolation on earth. But yet St Paul warrants us to draw encouragement from his case, under '*any trouble;*' and we know that He who gives to the martyr consolations proportioned to *his* day, will and does give to the ordinary believer, consolation proportioned to *his*. This the tried Christian will joyfully testify. With what delightful force does the argument of the apostle,

[1] Rom. v. 3; Acts v. 41; Rom. viii. 18. [2] 2 Cor. i. 3–5.

'*If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ*,[1] come home to such a one! '*If there be* any consolation in Christ!' he replies; 'yes, *if* there be a sun in the firmament; *if* a God in the universe; *if* such a thing as consolation in the world; *if* I have a head to think, or a heart to feel,—there is, O! *there is consolation in Christ*, strong, abundant, everlasting consolation.

The name Noah, we remarked, was typical of Christ, because he was to comfort the people of God, under the Lord's curse. God's people are indeed redeemed from the curse of the law, by Him who was made a curse for them; yet they have to bear the effects of the curse, in outward afflictions, sickness, bereavements, and death, and in the inward burden of sin.

Far from being exempt from the common trials of life, the child of God has often a large share of them; for this, among other wise reasons, that it may be proved, both to himself, and other men, that *there is consolation in Christ*. Deep in the believer's soul is this consolation hidden. It cannot be described; for 'it passeth all understanding.' Yet he will endeavour to make it known, to show forth the praise of God, his Saviour, and lead others to try for themselves, *if there be any consolation in Christ*.

When friends rise up to comfort him, he will thankfully receive their sympathy (even St Paul acknowledged his friends as 'a comfort' to him in sorrow), and if they be friends in Jesus, they may be blessed to administer much consolation. But still the afflicted Christian will say, or feel, 'Thankful as I am for your kind offices, 'they would avail me little, had I not *another Comforter*. 'Your words, however soothing, unless blessed by Him,

[1] Philip. ii. 1.

'cannot reach my heart; but he speaks comfort effectually, 'because He speaks *to my heart.*'[1] In the midst of this storm of affliction, I hear his gracious voice saying, 'Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid.' I hear him whisper, 'I, even I, am He that comforteth you.'[2]

Let us take, for example, the most severe trial of ordinary life, the sickness and death of a beloved relative or friend, and let us ask, what consolation is to be found in Christ under this grief? It would be easier to tell *how little* consolation there would be *without Christ*, than *how much* there is *in him.* How utterly inconsolable would the Christian be, while watching the dying couch of a parent, a husband, or wife, a brother, a child, or a friend dear to him as his own soul; were it not for *the consolation that is in Christ!* Were it not for the new and living way open for him to the throne of grace, how could the Christian approach God to plead either for his departing friend, or for himself? Were it not for the sympathy of his merciful and faithful High Priest, who, having once been a Man of Sorrows himself, can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, how could the believer support this agonizing scene? Were it not for the atoning blood and justifying righteousness of Christ, with what hopeless anguish must we see the soul, even of a good man, depart to the tribunal of a just and holy God! And without the assured hope of a resurrection, through Him who is the Resurrection and the Life, how could we bear to part with the dear, though lifeless remains of our beloved! Had we not the promise, and some experience, of indissoluble union with that Friend who can never die, and who sticketh closer than a brother, how could we contemplate, without despair, the stroke which must separate us from every earthly

[1] Hos. ii. 14, marginal reading. [2] Is. li. 12.

friend, either by their previous removal, leaving us in this dark world alone, or by our own entrance into an unknown and untried existence!

Oh! yes, brethren, *there is consolation in Christ* for the anxious and the bereaved heart. There is consolation in the simple and affecting record, 'Jesus wept;' in the tenderness wherewith he sympathized with mourners while here below, noticing all the peculiarities of their several cases, and pitying and relieving them accordingly. There is consolation in the assurance that 'Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever;' the same in compassion, though invested with all the majesty of Divine and Mediatorial glory: there is consolation in the assurance, that all things are given into *His* hands who groaned and bled for us; and that He will make all things work together for good to them that love God.

If we have the blessed hope that our departed friends have fallen asleep in Jesus, then indeed we have precious consolation in Christ. We 'sorrow not, even as others which have no hope;'[1] for we have an assured conviction, that the event which we mourn is to them unspeakable gain; and that, by the grace of God, it shall be made gain to us also; that we shall be more weaned from this transitory world, have our affections drawn more to things above, be brought into closer fellowship with, and nearer conformity to, our blessed Lord; that the promises of God shall be endeared to us, and we shall be quickened in prayer and in every duty, by the nearer and clearer view of eternal realities, that opens to us through the void left in our domestic circle. There is consolation in the assurance, that, washed in the blood of the Lamb, we, and all the redeemed, shall meet, to

[1] 1 Thes. iv. 13, 14.

part no more, in that blessed world, where our intercourse shall no longer be stained by sin, nor interrupted by distance and by death; but that with glorified bodies, and spirits 'made perfect,' we shall be 'ever with the Lord,' and with one another. Well, indeed, may we 'comfort one another with these words.'[1]

Heavy as are the sorrows which oppress the Christian from without, he has, however, still heavier sorrows *from within*, which make him appreciate still more highly the *consolation that is in Christ*. These sorrows arise from a sense of guilt, a fear of deserved wrath, and the hiding of God's countenance. When the Holy Ghost is about to come to any man as a Comforter, his first office is to convince of sin. And when he does this deeply and effectually, he causes a mourning and bitterness, like that which is felt at the loss of a first-born; a terror of the wrath to come, and of an eternity of misery, which sometimes drives the poor sinner almost to despair. There are various degrees of this bitterness. Many, we believe, are truly brought to God without overwhelming terror and distress. But, in all real penitents, there must be sorrow which *can find consolation nowhere but in Christ*, in looking unto Him whom they have pierced. And how strong is the consolation the trembling sinner finds, when he flees for refuge *there!* With admiring gratitude he surveys the all-sufficiency of the Atonement offered, the divine perfection of the Righteousness wrought, the acceptableness of the Mediation carrying on, the fulness and freeness of the Covenant mediated between God and sinful men, and the rich store of promises laid up for the penitent, till his

[1] 1 Thes. iv. 18.

heart revives within him, and he testifies, from deep-felt experience, that *there is consolation in Christ.*

But, alas! it is not at the beginning of his course only that the believer has cause to mourn for sin. The longer experience he has of his own corrupt heart, and of the goodness of his Lord, the deeper does his godly sorrow become. Even after being reconciled to God, by the death of his Son, and admitted to all the privileges of an adopted and beloved child, he too often wanders again from his gracious Father, lightly esteems the Rock of his salvation, and grieves and quenches the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. Then, when in mercy, the arrows of conviction are again made to reach his heart, how agonising are the wounds they inflict! He thinks of the grace he has abused, of the friendship of Christ which he has slighted, of the love of Christ which he has returned with coldness; of opportunities and warnings misimproved; of resolutions broken; of old sins relapsed into; of stumbling-blocks laid in the way of his brethren, and dishonour done to the cause of his Divine Master;—he feels corruption still strong within him, and grace still weak, and knows that this is all to be traced to his own negligence in seeking supplies out of the fulness that is laid up in Christ Jesus. At this dismal review, the believer sighs bitterly, and finds his sin a sore burden, too heavy for him to bear. But he looks anew to Christ crucified, and there finds consolation; he looks to the word of God, and there finds promises exactly suited to his need; such as, 'Return thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord.'[1] The Comforter applies these blessed promises and invitations to the believer's bleeding heart, and enables him to reply, 'O

[1] Jer iii. 12.

Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me.'[1] At this fresh instance of the goodness and forbearance of God, the believer's tears flow still faster; he loathes himself, and is confounded more and more, after that the Lord is pacified toward him.[2] But there is holy joy mingled with his tears, and he testifies, even more confidently than at his first coming to the cross, that *there is consolation in Christ.*

To deepen godly sorrow, to try faith, and to produce a higher sense of the value of his favour, the Lord is pleased at times to withdraw from the Christian the comfort of his manifested presence, to hide his face from him. Then, indeed, the Christian mourns, and is in heaviness. His hands hang down, and his knees grow feeble, and he sadly inquires, 'Hath God forgotten to be gracious? And will he shut up his loving-kindness in displeasure?' Yet here, likewise, *there is consolation in Christ*, and in the word of his grace. The Comforter has promises in store for this season also,—'Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.'[3] Though destitute of sensible comfort, the believer finds consolation in meditating on the unchangeable faithfulness of God. Though his own frame fluctuates, he knows that the Eternal changes not; that his covenant standeth sure; that he cannot deny himself. Though unable to find comfort in the *experience* of Christ's promises, he can yet find comfort in the *consideration* of them. If he cannot hear the Saviour say to him, 'Be of good comfort, thy sins be forgiven thee; go in peace;' he may yet hear the invitation, 'Be of

[1] Is. xii. 1. [2] Ezek. xvi. 63. [3] Is. l. 10; liv. 7, 8.

good comfort; rise, he calleth thee.' He calleth thee to come to him *now*, whether thou canst find evidence of a previous coming or not. If not, thou hast all the more need to hasten to him. Come, that you may find to your increasing humiliation, love, and confidence, that *there is consolation in Christ.*

We have hitherto viewed separately the sorrows arising from outward affliction, and those which spring from inward corruption and spiritual darkness, as if those sorrows never met in the believer at one time. But, alas! he is sometimes made to groan under their united pressure. Sometimes, indeed, under the greatest accumulation of trials from without, there is such a full tide of consolation poured within, as neutralises the affliction, and makes it scarcely felt to be grievous. But, at other times,—to show that the Lord is not bound to bestow one description of comfort, when he takes away another, and to humble the Christian in the lowest dust,—his sins are brought to his remembrance with peculiar bitterness, while his heart is broken by outward affliction; and God seems to forsake him at the very time when he most needs the comfort of his presence. He tries to pray, but God seems to have covered himself with a cloud, that his prayer should not pass through.[1] He tries to take comfort from the promises of Divine support in the time of trouble. But finding no sensible fulfilment of these promises, they only aggravate his distress, as if they witnessed against his being a child of God. Conscious guilt weighs down his spirits, and the Enemy takes advantage of his dejection, to bring fierce accusations against him, to alarm his conscience, and conceal from him the only Refuge. This is, indeed, a dark

[1] Lam. iii. 44.

season: without are fightings, within are fears. When the poor believer would comfort himself against sorrow, his heart is faint within him.[1] Yet, even here, *there is consolation in Christ.* There is consolation in the thought, that Jesus drank for us a cup of trembling, made up of similar ingredients, and mixed in infinitely greater proportions. In the hour of his excruciating bodily torments, and in the day of his desertion by earthly friends, his soul was overwhelmed with *sins, though not his own;* and the Father so forsook him, as to call forth the doleful lamentation, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?' Since, then, God so dealt with his beloved Son, when standing in the room of sinners, it is no proof of our not being sons, if he deal with us somewhat in like manner. And although we cannot trace our adoption in a Father's smile, we may perhaps trace it in the spirit with which we are enabled to receive a Father's frown. If, while we humbly receive the chastisement as less than we deserve, saying, 'I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him,' we can, at the same time, receive it as from a Father, who chasteneth us for our profit, and loveth whom he chasteneth, we are not totally destitute of comfort,—we have some evidence that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is, in him, our God and Father. And though, for the present, the chastening seemeth not joyous, but grievous, we have a confident hope, that afterward it shall yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto us, who are exercised thereby.[2] In the meantime, we cast ourselves, more lowly than ever, at the foot of the Cross; and, dark as our views may be, we yet do truly find *consolation in Christ.*

In the last great trial, when the believer has to walk

[1] Jer. viii. 18. [2] Heb. xii. 11.

through the valley of the shadow of death, oh! how solid, how blessed, is the *consolation he finds in Christ!* The rod and staff of the Lord, his Shepherd, do indeed comfort him; and so sweet are the consolations he receives, that the pangs of dissolution, and the grief of parting with those he loves, are swallowed up in the joyful anticipation of being 'ever with the Lord.'

But the Christian is often called to mourn over public, as well as private troubles. The state of the Church, weakened by lukewarmness, and rent by divisions within, and assailed by hostile forces without, causes him unfeigned sorrow. Yet here especially he may find *consolation in Christ.* He knows that He who is Head of the Church is Head over all things to the Church; that the government is upon His shoulders, who shall, in his own time and way, bring all his enemies either to a willing or a forced submission. And, as the Jewish Church waited for his *first* coming to console them under all their troubles, so the Christian Church waits for his *second* coming, to render his cause triumphant, and put a final termination to the sorrows of his people.

In what a delightful and attractive view does this Title present God our Saviour! Surely, one would think, it must disarm the enmity, and win the affection, of all who sojourn in the vale of tears, where trouble and sorrow are the inevitable portion of every man. Yet, alas! It is not so. *Christ is not the Consolation of men in general*, but only, *of Israel:* though he tenderly offers comfort to all who will seek it from him, the most part 'refuse to hear the voice of this Charmer, charm he never so wisely.' The reason is obvious. *His* comforts are *holy* comforts; and for these they have no relish. Another reason why unconverted men do not

seek consolation in Christ is, that *they have no need of consolation* under one of the principal causes of grief to *Israel*, viz. *spiritual* trouble. They know not what it is to mourn for sin, nor for the hiding of God's countenance, because they do not hate sin, nor do they know the joy of fellowship with God. They, therefore, feel no occasion to repair to Christ for spiritual consolation. Yet, they have their share of outward affliction; and it often excites the wonder of a Christian how temporal evils can be borne with so much fortitude and composure, by those who give no evidences of vital union with Christ. While he himself finds all the consolations of the gospel needful to keep up his drooping spirit, how can they bear similar afflictions without similar supports?

Several causes combine, to lessen the external distinction between Christian consolation and natural composure. Strength of mind, and buoyancy of disposition often make their possessor appear as cheerful, under affliction, as the consolation of Christ makes the Christian. Then, 'Time, the consoler,' gradually blunts the edge of the feelings, and brings with him new cares, occupations, and pleasures, which cheat men into a forgetfulness of their misery, as well as of their sin. The lost comfort is replaced by a new one; and this, in its turn, by another; so that, until all human and earthly comforts fail, the man contrives to be tolerably comfortable, without Christ; and in the preservation of this deceitful comfort, Satan doubtless assists.

How different is this state from that of the consoled believer, though, in outward appearance, there may be no very marked distinction. Often, however, the hollowness of worldly comforts is more conspicuous, in the hopeless dejection, the rebellious murmurs, and peevish dis-

eontent, whieh appear in the unsanetified mourner, and render him a truly pitiable objeet.

But we have still to inquire, whether they are to be envied, who are exempt from the greatest of all troubles, spiritual trouble? On the contrary, they are objeets of the deepest eommiseration, to good men on earth, and to angels in heaven. Nay, He who knew what was in man, and what is good for man, while he pronouneed a blessing on mourners, pronouneed a 'woe' on them who were rieh, and who had 'received their eonsolation.'[1] His Prophets denounced 'woe to them that are at ease in Zion,' that put far from them the evil day; and, in the midst of carnal indulgenees and dissipation, 'are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.'[2] His Apostles eall upon the careless and worldly, to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; to let their laughter be turned to mourning, and their joy to heaviness.[3]

And oh! that they would listen to the Divine admonitions, that their hearts might be softened and broken by the Spirit of God. For, if they will not mourn for sin now, they will be forced to mourn for it hereafter, for ever, 'with weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.'

Then, they who have sown in tears of godly sorrow shall reap in joy unutterable. For, 'God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor erying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things (shall) have passed away.'[4]

One thing more deserves consideration, under this Title, viz. the various meanings of the word rendered *Comforter*.

[1] Luke vi. 24. [2] Amos vi. 1–6. [3] James iv. 9. [4] Rev. xxi. 3, 4.

These have been purposely reserved for the conclusion, as furnishing a sort of test whereby to ascertain *whether we are individually partakers of the consolation that is in Christ*. The word, translated *Comforter*, also means *Advocate*, *Counsellor*, *Monitor*. In all these offices, Christ promised to send the Holy Ghost. We may therefore ascertain, in some degree, whether the Holy Ghost is our *Comforter*, by inquiring whether we receive, and heartily desire him as our *Monitor*, to convince us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment;[1] whether we look to him as our *Counsellor*, to guide us into all truth, to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us;[2] and as our *Advocate*, to make intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered:[3] in short, whether we desire to be *led* by the Spirit, and can discern in our hearts the *indwelling* of the Spirit.

If so, how thankfully may we adopt the language of the Apostle, 'Now, our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace, comfort our hearts, and stablish us in every good word and work,'[4]

[1] John xvi. 8.
[2] John xvi. 13, 14.
[3] Rom. viii. 26.
[4] 2 Thes. ii. 16.

ESSAY XXXVIII.

THE HOPE OF ISRAEL.

We are so familiar with the name of Hope, it is so powerful and universal a principle of our nature, that to define its meaning seems almost needless. Yet it is good to be able 'to give a reason of the hope that is in us;'[1] and more especially, when about to study this new title of God our Saviour, The Hope of Israel.

Hope, as well as Consolation, belongs to a state of mingled bliss and woe, of uncertainty and change. Where perfect and unchangeable happiness reigns, there is no room for Hope. It is, therefore, one proof, among many, that our present state is a state of probation and trial, that our reward is out of sight, and that the comfort of the saints consists more in hope than in present enjoyment, that we are said to be 'saved by hope,'[2] and that Christ is styled 'the Hope of Israel.'

Hope is one of the principal Christian graces. It is ranked by the Apostle, between those other two excellent graces, Faith and Charity.[3] The 'patience of hope' is associated by him with the 'work of faith,' and the 'labour of love,' as an undoubted evidence of salvation.[4]

[1] 1 Peter iii. 15.
[2] Rom. viii. 24.
[3] 1 Cor. xiii. 13.
[4] 1 Thes. i. 3.

To possess true Christian hope, we must be 'begotten again:'[1] and those who have 'no hope,' are 'without Christ, and without God in the world.'[2]

So important, then, being the place assigned to hope, in the economy of salvation, it becomes us seriously to inquire what distinct meaning we should attach to it, and in what senses it is used in Holy Scripture.

'Hope is a confident persuasion of obtaining some fu-
'ture good. The saint's hope is a firm expectation of
'all good things in time and in eternity, founded on the
'promises, relations, and perfections of God, and on the
'offices, righteousness, and intercession of Christ. It has
'an infinitely precious object, an infallible ground, and a
'purifying influence.[3]

There is a strong analogy between Hope and Faith. Leighton remarks, 'Faith is the root of all graces and of
'all obedience and holiness: and Hope is so near in na-
'ture to it, that the one is commonly named for the
'other: for the thing that faith apprehends and lays hold
'on, as present, in the truth of Divine promises, hope
'looks out for as to come, in their certain performance.
'The Apostle calls faith *the substance of things hoped for*,
'that which makes them be before they be,—gives a so-
'lidity and substance to them.'

Matthew Henry says, '*Faith* respects the *promise*,
'*Hope* the *thing promised*. *Faith* is the *evidence*, *Hope*
'the *expectation* of things not seen. Faith is the mother
'of Hope.'

St Paul's definition of *hope* seems a combination of *patient waiting* with *earnest expectation*. 'The *earnest expectation* of the creature *waiteth* for the manifestation of the sons of God. But if we *hope* for that we see not,

[1] 1 Peter i. 3. [2] Ephes. ii. 12. [3] Brown's Dictionary.

then do we *with patience wait* for it.'[1] Hope is not merely the absence of Despair. It is such an earnest desire, ardent longing, and lively expectation, as requires patient waiting to chasten and uphold it.

But the word hope, in Scripture, means sometimes, not the emotion or principle itself; but 1*st*, '*the thing hoped for;* or 2*d*, the *ground* of hope. In the first of these senses, *eternal life* is called '*that blessed hope*,'[2] and our *hope* is said to be *laid up in heaven*,[3] because the *reward* we hope for is laid up there. In the second, viz. as the *ground of hope*, Ethiopia was said to be the *hope* or *expectation* of the Jews;[4] they expected help from her against the Assyrians. And, in both these senses, God Almighty is 'the Hope of his people,' 'the Hope of Israel;'[5] because he is both the Object and the Foundation of their hope. The full enjoyment of God is the sum of all the *good* they hope for: and his power, wisdom, goodness, and truth, form the *ground* of all their hope.

In the Old Testament, we find this title ascribed to Jehovah, as the Object and Foundation of Israel's hope, under whatever griefs or troubles they might be. Jeremiah styles him, 'The Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble.'[6] He pronounces a curse upon the man[7] that trusteth in man, and a blessing upon the man 'whose Hope the Lord is.' And he introduces the adversaries of Israel, as excusing their cruelties towards them, on this ground, that they had sinned against the Lord, the habitation of justice; 'even the Lord, the Hope of their fathers.'[8] In the Psalms, also, God is frequently addressed as the Hope of his saints.[9]

Nothing, however, is more certain, than that it is only

[1] Rom. viii. 19–25. [2] Tit. ii. 13. [3] Col. i. 5.
[4] Isaiah xx. 5. [5] Joel iii. 16. [6] Jer. xiv. 8.
[7] Jer. xvii. 5–8. [8] Jer. l. 7 [9] Ps. lxxviii. 7; cxlvi. 5.

God in Christ who can, or ever could be, the Hope of sinners. Out of Christ, 'God is a consuming fire,' an Object, not of hope, but of terror and despair. We find, accordingly, that this title, The Hope of Israel, was understood as prophetic of the Messiah, by St Paul and his countrymen the Jews. When preaching to them at Rome, he said, 'For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.'[1] On a former occasion, when answering for himself before Agrippa, the Apostle said, 'Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, king Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews.'[2] It is plain, from the context, that the *hope* and *promise*, to which Paul here alludes, are the hope and promise of the resurrection of the dead: whether, therefore, by 'The Hope of Israel,' we understand him to mean Christ in person, or Christ as 'the Resurrection and the Life,' it is evident that he declares Messiah to have been the Hope of the fathers, the Hope of Israel.

In his Epistles, St Paul speaks of the Lord Jesus, as 'our Hope,' as 'Christ in you, the Hope of glory.'[3] The propriety of these titles, as ascribed to the Lord Jesus, will be manifest, when we view him shortly, as the *Author*, the *Object*, and the *Foundation* of his people's *hope*.

As he is the Author and Finisher of *Faith*, he must also be the Author and Finisher of *Hope*. For hope, like every other Christian grace, is wrought in the heart, and maintained there, by the Holy Ghost, shed abroad through the merits and intercession of the Saviour. And,

[1] Acts xxviii. 20. [2] Acts xxvi. 6–8.

[3] 1 Tim. i. 1; Col. i. 27.

as being the centre, substance, and Mediator of the covenant of grace, he is called 'a Covenant of the people;' so, being the author, centre, object, and foundation of his people's hope, he is called their Hope. Where Christ dwells, there Hope dwells; where Christ, the Lord of glory, reigns, there the Hope of glory reigns also. It is because Jesus, as our Forerunner and High Priest, has entered in within the vail, that our hope can anchor within the vail.[1] Christ seen by faith, and hope, are inseparable.

This will be still further manifest, by reference to the Scriptural statements concerning hope. Let us see by what epithets and qualities it is described by inspired apostles. It is called a *good*, a *blessed hope*, *lively*, *sure*, *and stedfast;* a hope *that maketh not ashamed;* a *patient*, a *believing*, and *rejoicing* hope; a hope *against hope;* a hope that *purifies*, and *defends* as a helmet.[2] Now, who could work, in our corrupt, miserable, unbelieving, and fearful hearts, a principle so exalted, so divine, save Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith?

Then, as to its *objects*, or *things hoped for*, our hope is called, the hope *of the Gospel*, the hope of *salvation*, the hope of *righteousness by faith*, the hope of the *resurrection*, the hope of *eternal life*, of *an inheritance incorruptible*, *undefiled*, *and that fadeth not away*, the hope of *glory*, the hope of *the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour*, *Jesus Christ*, the hope of *being like him*, *when he shall appear*.[3] Now, who can read these

[1] Heb. vi. 18–20. [2] 2 Thes. ii. 16; Tit. ii. 13; 1 Pet. i. 3; Heb. vi. 19; Rom. v. 5; 1 Thes. i. 3; Rom. xv. 13; Rom. xii. 12; Rom. iv. 18; 1 John iii. 3; 1 Thes. v. 8. [3] Col. i. 23; 1 Thes. v. 8; Gal. v. 5; Acts xxiii. 6; Tit. iii. 7; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4; Col. i. 27; Tit. ii. 13; 1 John iii. 3.

expressions, and not pereeive, that, of them all, Christ is the sum and substance? For, what is 'the hope of the gospel,' but Christ, in his person, work, offices, life, death, resurreetion, and exaltation, as revealed there? What 'the hope of salvation,' but Christ, the Saviour of sinners? What the glory and blessedness of our eternal inheritanee, but the full enjoyment of Christ our Lord, and perfeet resemblanee to him?

Then, as to the *grounds* of hope,—It is founded on the *mercy* of God; on *His* Almighty *power*, who ean do all things; on *His* unehangeable *truth*, who eannot lie; on his *word*, on his *grace*, on his *promise*, on his *oath*, on his *covenant;* in short, on God himself.[1] But, as we have often had oeeasion to remark, it is only in and through Christ, the Mediator, that any of the divine perfeetions can be grounds of hope to sinners. It is when we view them as pledged to perform all the promises of the eovenant made between the Father and the Son, for man's redemption; pledged to reward the perfeet obedienee of the Son, to aeeept his burnt-saerifice, to remember all his offerings, and fulfil all his petitions,[2] on our behalf; that the power, wisdom, justiee, goodness, and faithfulness of Jehovah, form the sure and stedfast anehor of our souls. In his *Resurrection*, the Lord Jesus is especially declared to be The Hope of Israel. For, not till the period of the general Resurreetion, will the hopes of his people be fully realized, either as regards their personal happiness, the prosperity of the Church, or, what is dearer to them than all besides, the glory of their Lord and Master. Even when at death they leave all sin and sorrow behind, and go to the immediate presenee

[1] Ps. xxxiii. 18; 2 Tim. i. 12; Heb. vi. 18, 19; Ps. cxix. 49; 2 Thes. ii. 16; Ps. cxxx. 7.

[2] Ps. xx. 3-5.

of God and of the Lamb, their *flesh rests in hope*,[1] and their *soul* has still room for *hope*, waiting till 'the creature itself also (its mortal part) shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God;'[2] till this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal immortality; till Death itself shall be swallowed up in victory, and all enemies be put for ever under the feet of the Lamb. Now, of this magnificent object of hope, the Resurrection of Christ is the sure and certain pledge. It is 'by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,' that we are 'begotten again unto this lively hope.'[3] All promised blessings are objects of the Christian's hope. St Paul accounted it worthy of his earnest expectation and his hope, that in nothing he should be ashamed; but that, with all boldness, as always, so then also, Christ might be magnified in his body, whether it were by life or by death.[4] Yet so paramount in his mind was the hope of eternal life, so necessary did he feel this hope, to support and comfort him under the trials and sorrows of a present world, that he exclaimed, 'If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.'[5] 'But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by Man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'

In this sense, then, most emphatically, Jesus Christ is OUR HOPE, THE HOPE OF GLORY.

Compared with this blessed and glorious hope, how vain, empty, and false are all other hopes! whether of

[1] Ps. xvi. 9. [2] Rom. viii. 19–21. [3] 1 Pet. i. 3.
[4] Philip. i. 20. [5] 1 Cor. xv. 19–22.

happiness in general, or of salvation in partieular! Let us eonsider, for a moment, *the superiority of Christian hope over every other, in its objects, its foundation, and its effects.*

What are the *objects* whieh the men of the world desire and hope for, but gilded baubles, presenting an appearanee of worth, but empty and perishable in the extreme? Even when gained, they eommonly mock the pursuer, and melt away as he attempts to grasp them. Or if they do retain their value in his estimation, when attained, how long ean he possess them? Is the enjoyment of forty or fifty years, which far exeeeds their probable duration, worthy the hope of an immortal soul?

Then, as to their *foundation*, even the best and purest objeets of earthly hope are marred by infirmity, and eontain in themselves the seeds of disappointment and deeay. Being tainted with pollution, they ean yield no perfeet happiness; and the happiness they do yield must soon expire. How often do we see the fair prospeet of domestie bliss clouded and overeast, when at its height! How many fond parents are ealled to bury in the grave their eherished hopes of future eomfort and reward in their children! How often have the hopes of a family, of a nation, of a ehureh, been blighted by what we eall the *premature* death of one whose talents, dispositions, and graees, gave promise of eminent usefulness in his generation! It must be so. For, when we build our hope of happiness upon any earthly object, be it lawful and right, or earnal and forbidden, we build it not only without God's promise, but contrary to his eommand. Has he not commanded us not to put our trust in prinees, nor in any ehild of man? Has he not commissioned his servants to ery, 'All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field?' 'What is your life? It is even a vapour,

that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' Whatever rests upon the power, will, or life of human agents, must be uncertain. Their power may fail, their will may change, or their life be cut off, at the very time when we most need their help. All such hopes are 'like a spider's web,' liable to be destroyed, any moment, by the slightest accident; like 'the giving up of the ghost,' or 'a puff of breath.'[1] Of all other hopes but that of the Gospel, it is truly said, 'Hope is the name of an uncertain good.' But the hope of the Christian, being built on two immutable things, viz. the promise and the oath of Jehovah, is sure and stedfast, and can never disappoint, or make him ashamed.

But *Christian hope is distinguished from worldly hope, by its effects also.* Whatever be the great object of desire for the future, tinges the character for the present. He whose hopes are set upon earthly things, remains earthly in his thoughts, tastes, and pursuits; but he whose mind and treasure are in heaven, gradually acquires heavenly dispositions, tastes, and habits. The glorious prospect of perfect conformity to Christ, hereafter, has a direct tendency to increase conformity to him here. 'Every man that hath this hope in him (the hope of seeing Christ as he is, and of being like him), purifieth himself, even as he is pure.'[2] Anticipation of the high honour and dignity we shall enjoy, when we are made kings and priests unto God in heaven, raises us above the mean and sordid cares and the polluting pleasures of earth, and makes us endeavour to taste as much of heaven as possible, even here.

The happy effects of Christian hope, upon the character and conduct, are very numerous. It produces patience under trials, self-denial, courage, activity, joy, even

[1] Job viii. 14; xi. 20. [2] 1 John iii. 2, 3.

joy unspeakable, and full of glory, amidst present tribulations. We constantly see the effects of hope in ordinary affairs. How diligently does the husbandman sow his seed, how patiently does he wait for the early and latter rain, in *hope* of a plentiful harvest! What bitter draughts will the sick man swallow, in *hope* of recovery! What arduous efforts does the drowning man put forth, if but a *hope* of safety remain! And with what valour does the *hope* of victory inspire the warrior! The Christian then can never be impatient, self-indulgent, timid, slothful, or sorrowful overmuch, while his hope is lively. Leighton well remarks, 'It is a foolish and groundless 'fear that assured hope is unfavourable to holiness. They 'are mutually strengthened and increased by the other. 'The more assurance of salvation, the more holiness, 'the more delight in it, and study of it, as the only way 'to that end. And as labour is then most pleasant, 'when we are made surest it shall not be lost, nothing 'doth make the soul so nimble and active in obedience, 'as this oil of gladness, this assured hope of glory.'

But the hope of the true Israelite differs from that of the nominal Israelite, as respects *salvation*, as widely as in the pursuit of happiness in general. We need not here dwell on the difference of their respective *grounds of hope;* the one resting on 'the Rock of Ages;' the other on the shifting sand, on vague notions of God's mercy, and of his own comparative innocence or righteousness, mingled in any proportions that suit his own estimate of himself, but utterly unscriptural and false. But the *object of hope*, with the nominal Christian, as respects salvation, is totally different from that of the believer. It is positively not 'the hope of righteousness by faith,' not 'the hope of the gospel,' not 'the hope of God's calling,'

nor 'the hope of glory.' The most it aspires after, in this life, is such a measure of righteousness as will suffice to quiet conscience, and maintain a good reputation among men: the highest points of its ambition, for eternity, are cessation from toil, exemption from sorrow and pain, reunion with departed friends, and certain dull and vague ideas of happiness, it knows not from whence. Never having known the sweetness of fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, here on earth, it can be no object of *hope* to the unconverted to obtain access to the immediate presence of God hereafter. Never having longed for the second coming of the Saviour, to take to himself his great power and reign, they cannot fix their *hope* on that grand event. Even deliverance from 'the wrath to come,' can hardly be said to form an object of *hope* to those who never felt what it was to be exposed to that wrath. Many live all their lives without either hope or fear, in respect of their immortal interests, at least without any lively sense of either. Good were it for them to be brought to feel the terrors of the Lord, to be forced to cry out, concerning every thing in themselves, 'There is no hope;' for, until they are reduced to this, they will never look out in earnest for hope in God.

The *effects* of this fearless yet hopeless state, are just such as might be expected. Instead of lively joy in Christ, instead of cheerful, devoted obedience, and patient submission, there is, at best, a stinted and niggard service, a formal and cold morality, and a heart at enmity with God. Of all the hopes which men build upon any thing but the finished work of Christ, accepted by the Father, and applied by the Spirit, it must be said, as of 'the hope of the hypocrite,' that it 'shall perish.' 'For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his

cry, when trouble cometh upon him?'[1]—Yes, even for him, 'there is hope,' as long as he is joined to the living.'[2] Let him, as 'a prisoner of hope,' 'turn him to the Stronghold,'[3] Jesus, the Refuge for sinners; and he may soon be 'filled with joy and peace in believing,' and 'abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.'

Hope, like other Christian graces, exists in very different measures, in different believers, and in the same believer, at different times. Sometimes it is at so low an ebb, that 'he putteth his mouth in the dust, *if so be* there may be hope.'[4] At other times, he '*abounds in hope*, through the power of the Holy Ghost.'[5] Often he has to struggle with unbelieving fears, and to urge his soul still to *hope* in God.[6] Then, again, he is found '*rejoicing in hope*'[7] with 'joy unspeakable and full of glory.'[8] This fluctuation may be traced, in part, to the sovereignty of God, who bestows hope, like every other gift, according to his good pleasure. But chiefly we must trace it to the sin and infirmity of believers themselves.

Since, then, to abound in hope, is not only a precious privilege, but a commanded duty, and an eminent grace, let us, in conclusion, inquire into the causes of its weakness and variableness, and into the best means of cultivating and cherishing it. 'It is (indeed) good that a man should both *hope* and *quietly wait* for the salvation of the Lord.'[9] And we ought not to repine if 'full assurance of hope' be not granted us, as soon as we ask for it. In general, however, we have less cause to chide ourselves for impatience in desiring this full assurance, than for indolent acquiescence in the want of it. Our hope is too seldom

[1] Job xxvii. 8. [2] Eccles. ix. 4. [3] Zech. ix. 12.
[4] Lam. iii. 29. [5] Rom. xv. 13. [6] Ps. xlii. 5.
[7] Rom. xii. 12. [8] 1 Pet. i. 8. [9] Lam. iii. 26.

'a *lively* hope,'[1] an animating principle, producing love, obedience, gratitude and zeal. The principal causes of this are, the weakness of our faith, the coldness of our love to Christ, the remaining carnality of our hearts, which inclines us to rest too much in earthly enjoyments; our shallow acquaintance with heavenly things, and our negligence in cultivating the fruits of the Spirit. We have such poor, low conceptions of the 'better country, that is, the heavenly,' which we profess to seek, that weeks, nay months sometimes pass, without one joyful realizing anticipation of it. We too much resemble Israel of old, who 'thought scorn of that pleasant land, and gave no credence to God's word.'[2] True it is, that we 'know not what we shall be;' yet we know enough to engage our most ardent desires, were those desires supremely fixed on Christ, and were our faith in all he has done, and is doing for us, in lively exercise. We know that 'when Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.' 'Let us, 'then, be frequently considering the glory wherein he is, 'and have our eye often upon that, and our hearts so-'laeing themselves frequently with thoughts of that 'place and condition wherein Christ is, and where our 'hopes are, ere long, to behold him; both to see his 'glory, and to be glorified in him. Is it not reason, 'yea, it is necessary; it cannot be otherwise, if our trea-'sure and head be in heaven, that our hearts be there 'likewise.'[3]

But, while simple faith in Christ, and frequent meditation on 'things above,' are necessary for the maintenance of a good and lively hope; it is no less necessary that we perceive within ourselves the warrant and seal of God's Spirit witnessing to the *sincerity* of our hope. Al-

[1] 1 Pet. i. 3. [2] Ps. cvi. 24. Prayer-Book Version. [3] Leighton.

though Christ alone is *the Hope of glory*, it is *Christ in us*, that can alone warrant our individual hope of glory. We can distinguish our hope from 'the hope of the hypocrite,' only by having in our hearts the witness of the Spirit. What was it that assured St Paul that he was an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ, but this, that the Spirit witnessed with his spirit, that he was a child of God?[1] What made him so confident that, whenever he should leave the body, he should be present with the Lord, but this, that God had given to him the earnest of the Spirit?[2] And how did he exhort the Hebrews to seek the 'full assurance of hope unto the end,' but by avoiding sloth, and by diligence in every good work?[3]

It needs no evidence in himself, for the poor sinner to hope in God's mercy, through Christ: he might wait for ever in vain, were this needful. But would we have a well-grounded hope that *we are* children of God, and partakers of the glory of Christ, we must prove the sincerity of our faith, by patience, experience, love, and every other fruit of the Spirit:[4] we must, in short, have evidence, that we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us.

'Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God; which made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever.'

'Let Israel hope in the Lord; for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption, and he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.'

[1] Rom. viii. 15–17, &c. [2] 2 Cor. v. 1–8. [3] Heb. vi. 11, 12.
[4] Rom. v. 1–5.

ESSAY XXXIX.

THE JOY OF ISRAEL.

The Joy of Israel, though not literally a Scripture title of the Redeemer, is the essence of much that is declared of him, in the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testaments. The pious Israelites used often to exhort one another to rejoice in the Lord. 'Let Israel rejoice in him that made him: let the children of Zion be glad in their King,'[1] was the frequent strain of the Psalmist. 'Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God,'[2] was the delightful summons of the Prophets.

No doubt the Israelites of old rejoiced in God, as their Almighty Protector, Benefactor, and King, who had chosen them for his peculiar people, and bestowed on them many exalted national privileges and spiritual advantages, above all other people. But the pious among them, doubtless, rejoiced in the Lord chiefly, on account of the salvation which he had promised them, through the Messiah. It was in anticipation of *his* coming, that the ancient Church was called on to rejoice:—'Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for *Lo, I come*, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord.'[3] This great

[1] Ps. cxlix. 2. [2] Joel ii. 23. [3] Zech. ii. 10.

event it was, which was to cause the wilderness and the solitary place to be glad, and the desert to rejoice, even with joy and singing;[1] which was to make the Gentiles also to rejoice, along with God's ancient people.[2]

That God in Christ is the ground of joy to believers, is indeed revealed with far more clearness in the New Testament than in the Old; but St Paul, by identifying '*the circumcision*' with those '*who rejoice in Christ Jesus*,'[3] proves, beyond a doubt, that the joy of Israel was substantially the same as the joy of Christians.

The coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh is, indeed, the most joyful event contained in the annals of this world. The birth of his herald, John the Baptist, was announced by an angel, as that which should cause many to rejoice.[4] The virgin mother of Jesus, in faith of the wonderful things told her from the Lord, said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour.'[5] And, when those wonderful things were performed, and the holy Child Jesus was laid in the manger, the news was proclaimed by a heavenly messenger, as 'good tidings of great joy,' which should be to all people.[6] Nor was the joy arising from this event confined to earth; a multitude of the heavenly host testified their sympathy with man, by joining in a rapturous song of praise.[7]

To an ungodly and unbelieving generation, the coming of so lowly a Messiah was indeed no cause of joy. In their eyes, he had 'no form nor comeliness, no beauty that they should desire him.' But, to the humble and believing, to them who 'looked for redemption in Israel,' the birth of Christ was, like the star which betokened it to the 'wise men,' a source of 'exceeding great joy.'

[1] Is. xxxv. 1, 2. [2] Deut. xxxii. 43. [3] Philip. iii. 3. [4] Luke i. 14.
[5] Luke i. 46, 47. [6] Luke ii. 10. [7] Luke ii. 13, 14.

During his personal ministry, the Lord Jesus promised much joy to his followers, a joy which no man should take from them.[1] But their minds were not prepared to receive this joy, till, by his death and resurrection, Jesus went away, and came again unto them. They had seasons of rejoicing, indeed, over his miraculous works, and in expectation of his triumphal reign. But that was a transient joy, not such as could endure through 'much tribulation;' for 'the Holy Ghost was not yet given,' in the fulness of his operation. No sooner, however, was the Lord risen from the dead, than great joy filled the hearts of his disciples. He saw them again, and their hearts rejoiced. Even when their beloved Master was parted from them, and carried up into heaven, they were enabled to rejoice, because he was gone to the Father; 'they returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.'[2] The promises of their Lord were abundantly fulfilled; they were 'filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.' They rejoiced even amidst persecution, contempt, and reproach,—according to the command, and the implied promise, of Jesus, 'Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy; for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets.'[3]

The early converts to Christianity were eminent examples of the power of this joy. They received the word 'in much affliction,' yet 'with joy of the Holy Ghost.'[4] They were 'exceeding joyful' in all their tribulation.[5] They took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.[6]

[1] John xvi. 22. [2] Luke xxiv. 51–53. [3] Luke vi. 23.
[4] 1 Thes. i. 6. [5] 2 Cor. vii. 4. [6] Heb. x. 34.

Christ Jesus, then, is the Joy of his people, The Joy of Israel. He would not have them rest satisfied with consolation and hope, which, sweet as they are, are yet emotions of comparative delight, deriving their chief value from the opposite emotions of grief and fear, and known only to imperfect beings, placed in a state of vicissitude and danger. He gives them also joy, an emotion of positive delight and satisfaction, felt in the realms of perfect purity and unchanging bliss, by sinless angels, yea, by the glorious Jehovah himself; for, saith the Lord, 'I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people.'[1] 'As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee.'[2]

To the believer, when in a lively frame, it seems a cold formal thing, to sit down and deliberately state, why he rejoices in Christ Jesus! The blessed name of the Saviour fills his heart with joy, ere he has time to trace its sources. This joy has become a sort of second nature to him, which can be better felt than described. Still, we ought to be ready to give a reason of the joy, as well as of the hope, that is in us. Let us therefore inquire *first*, *What grounds of rejoicing the believer has in Christ?* and, *secondly*, *By what means this joy is to be maintained and increased?* In this, as in all former inquiries, our guide shall be the infallible word of God, and its replies will be found invariably to accord with experience.

The first cause of joy in Christ which the sinner can taste, springs from belief in the *reconciliation* which he has effected between God and man. 'We joy in God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement.'[3] The word here rendered *atonement* might be more properly rendered *reconciliation*; for,

[1] Isaiah lxv. 19. [2] Isaiah lxii. 5. [3] Rom. v. 11.

strictly speaking, it is *God* who *receives* the *atonement*, and *man* the *reconciliation* wrought by the atonement.[1] What greater joy can be conceived, than that of the self-condemned sinner, when first he finds that the Omnipotent Being, whom he has so grievously offended, is *pacified* toward him; that God has himself removed every obstacle to peace, and made it consistent with the honour of his government, to 'justify the ungodly, who believe in Jesus;' not only to pardon the penitent sinner, but to admit him to the most cordial and unreserved friendship! It is joy even to hear the message of reconciliation; but O! it is far greater joy to *receive* the reconciliation, gratefully to acquiesce in the terms of it, and to experience the tenderness of a Father's forgiveness, of which the reception of the Prodigal Son is a beautiful illustration.

The next ground of rejoicing which the believer finds in Christ, is in his perfect *Righteousness* being imputed to him. With the prophet, he exclaims, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of rightcousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.'[2] This also is a joy of appropriation and experience. It is joyful news that 'the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, is unto all, and upon all them that believe.'[3] But how is that joy enhanced when, with lively confidence, we can say, 'Being justified by faith, *we* have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.'[4]

We might enumerate many more grounds of joy which

[1] See Scott on Rom. v. 11.
[2] Isaiah lxi. 10.
[3] Rom. iii. 22.
[4] Rom. v. 1, 2.

the believer finds in Christ; for every part of his person, of his character, of his work, and offices, abounds in matter of joy, to those whose hearts are opened to receive it. But this would lead to too wide a range, and we must confine ourselves at present to one consideration; viz. that *Christian joy arises principally from conscious union and communion with Christ.*

Union with Christ is necessary to *communion* with him. A *felt union* is necessary to *joyful communion;* and these two, by mutual re-action, strengthen each other, and form the basis of the believer's joy. Assurance of *union* with Christ sweetly constrains the believer to seek *communion* with him, in every appointed way; and the more diligently, humbly, and affectionately he *communes* with Christ, the stronger becomes his assurance that *he is Christ's*, and *Christ is his.*

To 'rejoice in Christ Jesus,' then, we must have some *evidence of personal union* with him. 'We must find 'him ours, otherwise the more excellent he is, the more 'cause hath the heart to be sad, while it hath no portion 'in him. "*My Spirit hath rejoiced,*" saith the blessed 'virgin, "*in God my Saviour.*"'[1] Many sincere Christians shrink from rejoicing at all in their evidences, as if it savoured of legality and self-righteousness; but St Paul, while he utterly renounced his own righteousness for justification, while he confessed that in him, that is in his flesh, there dwelt no good thing, yet rejoiced in the evidences of his interest in Christ, which he could trace in his renewed state and holy walk. To the Corinthians he writes, 'Our *rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience*, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abun-

[1] Leighton.

dantly to you-ward.'[1] And he exhorts the Galatians *to prove every man his own work*, and then he should have *rejoicing in himself alone.*[2]

The same lesson is taught in the Old Testament. For, who are they that are summoned to *rejoice* in the Lord, to *be glad* in him, and *shout for joy?* It is '*the righteous*,' the '*upright in heart*,'[3]—those who know their *justification* by their begun *sanctification*, and, amid numberless sins and short-comings, are yet conscious of integrity in God's service.

Christian joy is well defined by Cruden, as 'the delight and satisfaction of the reasonable soul in its union with God in Christ, as the greatest and highest good, with an actual rejoicing in what is for his honour and glory.' It was immediately after he had unfolded to his disciples the intimate union they should have with himself, and with the Father, through him, that Jesus said, 'These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.'[4] From the same source, viz. '*Fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ*,' the apostle John drew *his* joy, and urged his brethren to draw *theirs*, even fulness of joy.[5]

If friendly and confidential intercourse between human beings, alloyed as it is by mutual infirmities, and interrupted as it often is by distance and by death, yet affords so much delight, how delightful must it be to hold intercourse, more tender and confiding, than we can enjoy with our most congenial earthly friend, with ONE who has no error nor infirmity, being Infinite Perfection and Incomparable Loveliness; and who, nevertheless, can bear with our infirmities far better than any of our own race can do; who is never absent, and, above all, who can never die!

[1] 2 Cor. i. 12. [2] Gal. vi. 4. [3] Ps. xxxii. 11; lxviii. 3, &c.
[4] John xv. 1–11. [5] 1 John i. 3, 4.

This holy intercourse with God, through Christ, the saints enjoy especially in *ordinances*, those 'wells of salvation,' out of which they 'draw water with joy.'[1] They go to the altar of God, unto God their exceeding joy;[2] and he meets them, and makes them joyful in his house of prayer.[3]

But not in ordinances only, does the believer rejoice in communion with his God and Saviour. The *secret study of God's word* is to him a source of true delight. He rejoices in it, as one that findeth great spoil.[4] He says unto the Lord, 'Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart.' And how abundant does this joy become, when, with conscious interest in the love of God through Christ, the believer can add, 'for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of Hosts.'[5]

Secret prayer is another most necessary and delightful mode of enjoying God. When, in this exercise, the believer is admitted to near communion with his heavenly Father, he experiences the truth of the Saviour's promise, 'Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full;'—he finds the declaration of the Psalmist verified, 'In thy presence is fulness of joy;'—and feels disposed to say to all around him, 'O taste and see that the Lord is good.'

But, of all modes of exercising holy joy, the act of *praise* is the most natural and appropriate; praise being the expression of the believer's joy in Christ. When, by remembering God upon our bed, and meditating on him in the night-watches, our soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, the fit expression of this satisfaction is to praise God with joyful lips.[6] Indeed, the very end

[1] Is. xii. 3. [2] Ps. xliii. 4. [3] Is. lvi. 7.
[4] Ps. cxix. 162. [5] Jer. xv. 16. [6] Ps. lxiii. 5, 6.

for which the Lord turns his people's mourning into dancing, puts off their sackcloth, and girds them with gladness, is, that they may sing praise to him, and not be silent.[1] It is said in the Psalms, 'The saints sing aloud upon their beds.' Yes, often upon the bed of agony and of death, when the body is fast hastening to decay, the soul rejoices in communion with Christ, and gives utterance to this joy in songs of triumph and praise.

The joy which thus cheers the dying saint has been enlarged upon in the preceding Essay, for it is 'rejoicing *in hope* of the glory of God.' Since, then, the *hope* of glory gives such unutterable joy, what will its *possession* give? We can say nothing concerning it, but that it will be a participation of the joy of our Lord,[2]—a share in that exalted blessedness, which the Redeemer himself enjoys, and for which 'he endured the cross, despising the shame.'[3] And what more need be said? Oh! how must the soul be lost in wonder, and delight, when first it enters into the joy of its Lord! Nor will the joys of heaven, like those of earth, lose their zest by familiarity, or satiate by abundance: they will be ever new, ever increasing, as the capacities of the soul enlarge, and as the glory of God is more fully displayed to it. Then, indeed, 'the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.'[4]

But we have still to show that the believer's joy springs from communion with Christ, taking the word *communion* in the sense of *a joint and mutual interest*, in virtue of which, the believer feels 'an actual rejoicing in 'whatever is for Christ's glory.'[5]

[1] Ps. xxx. 11, 12. [2] Mat. xxv. 21. [3] Heb. xii. 2.
[4] Is. xxxv. 10. [5] Cruden.

As Christ has made the believer's interest *his*, so the believer makes Christ's interest *his;* and therefore rejoices in every thing that promotes the honour of his name, whether it be the conversion of one sinner, or the preaching of the Gospel to thousands.

Some Christians have imagined that they could rejoice in the glory of God, though he were to condemn themselves to everlasting destruction. This is going beyond the command, and even beyond the example, of our blessed Master; for he exhorted his disciples to 'rejoice that their names were written in heaven;' and he himself was upheld and encouraged in the stupendous work he had undertaken, by looking to 'the joy set before him.' But, while our Lord does not require us to forget or overlook our own eternal interests, he certainly requires us to subordinate all our temporal concerns to his cause and that of his Gospel; and to rejoice when that prospers, although our outward condition be far from joyous. Of this, we have a noble example, in St Paul. He determined to rejoice that Christ was preached, although in a manner that was maliciously intended to add affliction to his bonds.[1] And, in expectation of being 'offered up' a victim for the truths he preached, he joyed and rejoiced, and urged his converts also to joy and rejoice with him, having the assured prospect of rejoicing in the day of Christ, that he had not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.[2]

In a subordinate sense, Christians are a *joy to each other*, helpers of each other's joy.[3] But this joy in each other, when purest, springs from their united rejoicing in Christ, and in his glory, manifested in each other.

With such solid and abundant grounds for rejoicing

[1] Philip. i. 15–17. [2] Philip. ii. 16–18. [3] 1 Thes. ii. 19, 20.

in Christ Jesus, it is strange that believers should need to be urged to it, as a duty, as well as invited to it, as a privilege. Yet such is the fact. We are sinfully backward to engage in joyful exercises; and need to be reminded that spiritual joy is one of 'the fruits of the Spirit,'[1] one of the distinguishing features of Christ's subjects.[2] Our joy in Christ has so little life, energy, or realization, that it would almost seem as if we transferred to it the caution of St Paul, with regard to creature-joys; we rejoice, as though we rejoiced not.

We ought, however, to keep in mind, that much more than our own personal comfort depends on our rejoicing in Christ. Besides being the best stimulus to activity and perseverance, for 'the joy of the Lord is our *strength*,'[3] it brings honour to God, and greatly promotes the cause of vital religion. It is very hurtful to that cause, when serious Christians allow themselves to wear a gloomy aspect, and make known their complaints more than their joys. It is indeed a difficult command, 'Rejoice in the Lord alway.' The Christian has so many causes for mourning, within and without, that he must need be sometimes in heaviness; still, he should strive and pray against habitual dejection; and endeavour, by a cheerful, serene deportment, to invite others to share his joys; saying, 'Come thou with us, and we will do thee good.'

Since, then, Christian joy is so delightful to ourselves, so honourable to God, and so edifying to the world; and since, nevertheless, we are so backward to cultivate it; Let us briefly inquire, *Secondly, What are the best means to this end?*

The first advice we would give, for the cultivation of

[1] Gal. v. 22. [2] Rom. xiv. 17. [3] Neh. viii. 10.

holy joy, may excite surprise in some readers: it is the cultivation of godly *sorrow*. The joy to which we are called, is essentially the joy of a soul *whom God has redeemed*,[1] it is *joy in God's salvation*,[2] the joy and gladness of one *whose bones have been broken*[3] by conviction of sin.

This godly sorrow is generally acknowledged to be necessary to Christian joy, when the soul first flees for refuge to Jesus and his Cross. But is there not an idea too common, that this sorrow belongs chiefly to the outset of the Christian course; and that, as we advance, it may be exchanged for permanent joy? True it is, that as the believer grows in the knowledge of the Divine perfections, seen in the face of Jesus Christ, as he grows in experience of the love and faithfulness of the Saviour, and in sanctification, his joy, like all his other graces, grows abundantly. But it is equally true, that his joy can only abound in proportion as his godly sorrow abounds. In so much as he loses the keen sense of *what* he is *saved from*, in so much he loses the keen sense of joy in God's *salvation*. If the joy of the blessed in heaven is represented as springing from lively recollection of the dangers they have escaped, and of the means whereby they have escaped; if their most joyful song runs thus, 'For Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood;' surely it must ill become the poor sinner on earth to rejoice in Christ without mingling tears of godly contrition with his mirth. Nor will this diminish his real joy: it will add to it a sweetness and a tenderness which must be felt to be understood. Those who, like the lark, lie lowest before God, are prepared, like him, to soar highest towards heaven in joyful songs. And if any have ceased habitually to *mourn*, they need not

[1] Ps. lxxi. 23. [2] Ps. xxxv. 9. [3] Ps. li. 8.

search farther to discover why they do not habitually *rejoice.*

When to godly sorrow is added lively faith in the finished and accepted work of Christ, fervent love wrought by faith, and assured hope, springing from faith and love, we have all the necessary ingredients for rejoicing in Christ. Yet, let us remember, that this, like all other graces, must be sought directly from God; and let our prayer therefore be, 'Rejoice the soul of thy servant; for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.' 'Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?'

ESSAY XL.

THE GLORY OF ISRAEL.

We are now called to rise a step higher in the contemplation of God our Saviour; to view him, not only as the Hope, and the Joy, but as THE GLORY OF HIS PEOPLE ISRAEL.

'To glory in any object, includes these two things; 'first, *a high esteem of it;* and then, *some concern in it.* 'We do not glory in the things we are interested in, 'unless we esteem them; nor in the things we admire 'and esteem, unless we are some way interested in 'them.'[1]

Most men, whether individuals or nations, have something wherein they glory, boast, or value themselves. But, 'Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth, glory in this, *that he understandeth and knoweth Me*, that I am the Lord,'[2] &c.

The only true glory of any people, then, consists in their knowledge of the Lord, and their relation to him. This honourable distinction was, for many ages, conferred

[1] Maclaurin's Sermon on Glorying in the Cross of Christ.

[2] Jer. ix. 23, 24.

almost exclusively upon one people: Jehovah was pleased to style himself, 'The Lord God of Israel,' and 'The Glory of Israel.' Thus, when Israel forsook God in the wilderness, it is said, 'They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass.'[1] And, when God was complaining of the idolatry of Israel, he said, 'My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit;—they have forsaken Me.'[2]

The ark of the covenant was the honourable token of the Jews' peculiar relation to God; 'a glorious type and 'assurance of God's presence, and the great safeguard 'and ornament of Israel, wherein they could *glory* above 'all other nations.'[3] When this precious symbol fell into the enemies' hands, it was said, 'The glory is departed from Israel; or, Where is the glory?—There is no glory.'[4] St Paul, in enumerating the peculiar privileges of Israel, mentions the ceremonial ark, by this name, 'The glory.' But in the same sentence he shows, that to Israel was given a more honoured relation to God, than that which the ark, and all the other external symbols of God's presence, could bestow; viz. that 'of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever.'[5] We all know that the grand object of *glorying* to Israel, was their expected Messiah; and that this was one of the Titles under which the Infant Saviour was welcomed by pious Simeon, 'The Glory of thy people Israel.'[6] 'About the time of 'Christ's coming, the Jews were big with the hopes of 'him, as their great deliverer, and the chief ornament of 'their nation. And, if history be credited, even the 'heathens had a notion, about that time, which possibly

[1] Ps. cvi. 20. [2] Jer. ii. 11. [3] Cruden.
[4] 1 Sam. iv. 21; marginal reading. [5] Rom. ix. 4, 5.
[6] Luke ii. 32.

'was derived from the Jewish propheeies, that there was 'a Prince of unparalleled glory to rise in the East, and 'even in Judea in partieular, who was to found a kind 'of universal monarehy. But their vain hearts, like 'those of most men in all ages, were so intoxieated with 'the admiration of worldly pomp, that that was the only 'greatness they had any notion or relish of. This made 'them form a pieture of Him who was "the Desire of 'all nations," very unlike the original.'[1]

Professing Christians, however, are not exposed to the same danger as the Jews were, of mistaking the nature of Messiah's glory. If they do so, their guilt is mueh more inexeusable, now that he is come, and has manifested forth his glory, and has sent his Evangelists and Apostles to declare it to the world. Yet is it a lamentable truth, that but a few, out of the multitude of professing Christians, do glory in Christ; and that those few do not glory in him as they ought.

Two things, as stated above, are neeessary to our glorying in any objeet. 1st, *A high esteem of it;* 2d, *some concern in it.* Let us then eonsider how these two things are involved in the believer's glorying in Christ.

It would lead to too great length and repetition, were we to enlarge mueh here on the first thing mentioned, viz. the *high esteem the believer has of his Divine Redeemer.* It has been, and by God's help, it shall be, the design of this whole work, to deelare the glory and excellency of Immanuel, and to point him out as the supreme objeet of love, admiration, esteem, and praise, to all men. We have adored him as the eternal Word and Son of God, reigning in glory with the Father, 'before the world was.' We have traeed him, in the reeords of ancient

[1] Maclaurin's Sermon.

prophecy, as 'the Branch of the Lord, beautiful and glorious;' who should 'build the temple of the Lord, and bear the glory;' as 'the Root of Jesse, whose rest should be glorious;' as that Nail in a sure place, upon whom they should hang 'all the glory of his Father's house.'

In the history of Christ's incarnate state, we have heard his Advent hailed, as that which brought 'glory to God in the highest.' We have followed the blessed Jesus, through the streets of Jerusalem; to the mountain, to the lake, to the dreary wilderness; we have sat with him in the fishing-boat, and rested with him on the well; we have seen him feeding, healing, and instructing assembled multitudes; apart with his disciples, or alone on the mountain; and in all these situations, we, like the disciples, have 'beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.'

The closing scenes of the Redeemer's mortal life we have, with intense interest, contemplated; we have viewed him, as 'the Lord of glory,' even while hanging on the accursed tree.

More lately, we have studied the glory of Christ, as Mediator and Covenant-Head, dispensing all spiritual blessings to his people.

In future parts of this work, we propose to consider the glory of his Resurrection and Ascension, and the glory in which he will come again to judge the quick and the dead.

Such being the aim and design of this whole work, it is unnecessary in one section of it, to enter minutely into the ground of the believer's high esteem of Christ. We proceed, therefore, to the second thing implied in the believer's glorying in Christ; viz. his *personal concern or interest in him.*

The believer glories in Christ, as THE LORD HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS, and THE LORD HIS STRENGTH;[1] in whom he is justified, and by whom he is enabled to conquer every enemy, and overcome every difficulty. He glories in Christ, not only as the Saviour of all them that believe, but as *his own* Saviour; according to the song of the Psalmist, 'I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name for evermore; for great is thy mercy *toward me*, and *thou hast delivered my soul* from the lowest hell.' He glories in Christ, as made to himself, individually, Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption. He glories in claiming, in his own person, all those near and tender ties of relationship, which Christ has formed between himself and his people; in cleaving to Immanuel, as his Friend and Brother; yea, he glories in the wonderful assurance that he is one with Christ, by mutual interest and mutual sympathy; that he dwells in Christ, and Christ in him, by a union more entire, than can be expressed by any earthly union; for it is compared to that which subsists between the Father and the Son.[2]

But what chiefly distinguishes the believer's glorying in Christ is, that he *glories* most in that part of the Saviour's history which, to the world, is not only offensive, but *contemptible:* viz. in his CROSS! The world would be willing enough to glory in Christ, if they could blot out the Cross from his history. But the true Israelite glories especially in this, saying, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ:'[3] and it is his own personal concern in that Cross, which renders it to the believer an object of glory-

[1] Isaiah xlv. 24, 25; xli. 15, 16. [2] John xvii. 21.
[3] Gal. vi. 14.

ing: it is when his faith is in lively exercise, and he can say, 'he loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*,' that the believer most truly and joyfully glories in Christ.

But the Christian glories in Christ, not only as an individual, but as a member of the Church universal. He therefore rejoices in the assurance, that the Lord is a wall of fire round about Zion, and the glory in the midst of her;[1] and that in the New Jerusalem, which is above, the Lord shall be to his Church an everlasting light, and her God her glory,[2] for she shall have 'the glory of God.'[3]

From the disposition to *glory in Christ* springs the desire to *glorify him*: 'to confess that all the glory, gifts, 'and dignity, which we have above other men, are given 'us of God: to be willing to abase ourselves in the ac- 'knowledgement of our own vileness, that God may be 'glorified.'[4] How careful is the Apostle Paul to give to God all the glory of salvation, from its first cause, in electing grace, to its outward manifestation in the life: all is 'to the praise of the glory of his grace,'[5] 'unto the glory and praise of God.'[6] And this is the aim which he urges all his converts to pursue, 'Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.'[7] 'Ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.'[8]

In like manner St Peter,—'If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.'[9]

But we have higher authority than that of Apostles,

[1] Zech. ii. 5. [2] Isaiah lx. 19. [3] Rev. xxi. 11.
[4] Cruden. [5] Eph i. 6. [6] Philip. i. 11.
[7] 1 Cor. x. 31. [8] 1 Cor. vi. 20. [9] 1 Peter iv. 11.

to enforce upon us this universal aim: our Lord himself has said, 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.'[1]

On first turning to the Title now before us, it did not appear to involve deep searchings of heart and life: but on longer consideration, it administers the most cutting rebukes and self-condemning reflections. For, since God has given us *such* an object to *glory in*, as his dearly-beloved and co-equal Son; and since He offers to us the most intimate *concern* in that Son; what must be the guilt of *glorying in any thing but Christ?* Still more, what must be the guilt of being *ashamed of Christ?* Yet, of both these sins we are all guilty. We are all prone to glory in something of our own; in opposition to the declared purpose of God, in the scheme of Redemption, 'That no flesh should glory in his presence;'[2] but that the salvation of every sinner should be ascribed to his rich mercy and free grace; 'not of works, lest any man should boast.' The propensity to self-glorying exists in a great variety of degrees, in different characters; but some portion of it lurks in every human breast. Some there are, who, though their standard of morality is not very high, are yet so well satisfied with their own doings, that to the grief and astonishment of the Christian, he hears them boast of their virtue, and confidently expect Heaven, as its due reward; as ignorant of the way of salvation as if they had never heard the Saviour's name, and as ignorant of their own state, as if they had never formally confessed themselves 'miserable sinners.'—Others again, less confident in the sufficiency

[1] Mat. v. 16. [2] 1 Cor. i. 29.

of their own goodness and their own strength, are contented to *share with Christ* the glory of their salvation: they ascribe to the Righteousness of God the glory of completing that of a sinner; and to the strength of Omnipotence, the glory of assisting that of a worm! All such compromises, however, are vain: as God has declared, 'I will not *give* my glory to another,' so neither will he condescend to *share* his glory with another. He must have *all* the *glory* in *saving*, or he will have *glory* in *destroying*.

St Paul declares, even of Abraham, the father of the faithful, that he had nothing to glory in before God:[1] and of himself the Apostle confesses, that he is *nothing*.[2] It may be argued, indeed, from the very portion of Scripture where this expression is found,[3] that St Paul did, at times, glory in himself. But the case was very peculiar. The attacks made on the Apostle, by 'false apostles and deceitful workers,' made it necessary for him to recapitulate his labours and sufferings, his disinterestedness, zeal, gifts and graces, which rendered him 'not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.' It was necessary for the defence of the gospel itself, that he should maintain his own integrity, and the authority which 'the Lord had given him for edification.' But, although necessary, it is evident that this 'boasting' was very repugnant to the humble mind of the Apostle. He repeatedly calls it 'folly;' says he has become a 'fool in glorying,' and that they had 'compelled' him to it. And mark how he sums up all his 'boasting.'—'If I must needs glory, I will glory of the things that concern my infirmities:'—'Of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities:'—'Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in

[1] Rom. iv. 2. [2] 2 Cor. xii. 11. [3] 2 Cor. x., xi., xii.

my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.'

The consistent Christian is often accused by the ungodly, of pride, self-esteem, and vain-glory, because his practice secretly condemns theirs, and they therefore cannot believe but that he glories in his superior strictness and sanctity. But, whereas the Christian will be the first to confess that pride does indeed lurk within him, and that he feels too often the risings of vain-glory; this very confession proves that pride and self-glorying are not willingly cherished by him, but hated and resisted, as his own worst enemies, and those of his God. He cannot but be conscious that, in many respects, he differs from the unconverted; but remembering Who maketh him to differ, and comparing all his advantages, opportunities, and privileges, with the poor returns he makes for them;—tracing every good thing to the grace of God, and every evil thing to his own corruption; he stands astonished at the wonderful favour shown to so vile a sinner, and exclaims, 'Who am I, Lord God, and what is my father's house, that thou hast brought me hitherto?'

But, while genuine humility and true glorying in Christ are to be found only in believers, it is to be lamented, that even they fall sadly short of the holy triumph and exultation which become the followers of so glorious a Leader; that, although they do not wilfully 'glory in the flesh,' they are, nevertheless, sinfully backward in glorying in Christ; nay, that they are sometimes *ashamed* of him! This latter sin, indeed, belongs more to disciples, than to the world; for *they* can hardly be said to be *ashamed* of Jesus who never knew him. It is those who have been his chosen companions and confidential friends, who have received his affectionate

counsels, his faithful admonitions, and tender assurances of love; it is *they* against whom the charge must chiefly be laid; of being ashamed of Jesus! Well may we exclaim,

> 'Ashamed of Jesus! can it be?
> 'A mortal man ashamed of Thee!'

This, certainly, is the most monstrous sin that any man can commit; and were it not too plainly proved, by observation and sad experience, would seem impossible. That the carnal mind should be *enmity* against God, does not appear quite so amazing: but that helpless dust and ashes should *despise* God, should be *ashamed* to claim kindred with the Lord of Hosts, the King of glory, this must surely excite the wonder of angels and of devils. Yet are believers so strongly tempted to commit this monstrous sin, that their Lord's threat that he will deny those who deny him, and his promise that he will confess those who confess him, before his Father in heaven, are both needful to deter them from it.

It is in our ordinary walk and conversation, chiefly, that we are called to glorify, and glory in, Christ our Lord; and it is here, also, that we are most tempted to deny him. Let us, then, seriously examine whether, as opportunity offers, we are ready to 'show forth his righteousness and his wisdom all the day;' or if we do not rather 'hide his righteousness within our hearts,' and blush to 'speak of his testimonies,' before those who despise them; contented to see our glorious Lord forgotten, and shut out of the world he has created, provided he be not openly blasphemed.

Are we ready, in all companies, and at all times, to avow our obligations to Jesus, and our entire dependance upon him; to claim kindred with him, as our only distinguishing glory? And if we obtain credit for any

thing we have done, are we anxious to ascribe the whole merit of it to Christ? Or, are we not, rather, well pleased to receive approbation in our own persons, and to welcome the applause of the pious, in exchange for that of the world?

A profession of serious religion is now so common, and, in most societies, so respectable, that it requires but little Christian courage to maintain it in a certain degree. But, if some mode of honouring Christ be proposed to us, that goes a single step beyond the line marked out by custom in the circle wherein we move, do not many doubts, and hesitations, and sinful excuses arise, to deter us from thus glorifying our Lord? Surely our hearts are but little filled with love to Christ, else we should not measure so narrowly the amount of glory we ought to render him. Oh! that we had more of the Apostle's spirit, who could say, 'Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savour of his knowledge by us in every place.'

For attaining this spirit, the same graces are necessary as for attaining Christian joy, namely, Repentance, Faith, Love, and Hope. And our glorying in Christ will always keep pace with our *assurance of a personal interest in him*. St Paul was *not ashamed* of Christ and his gospel, because he *knew* not only *in whom* he had believed, and the power and willingness of Christ to keep all the souls committed unto him against that day, but he *knew that he had committed his own soul to Christ*;[1] that he had made a personal covenant with God, through the one Mediator; and therefore his eternal interests were secure. In proportion, then, as we *know Christ*, and *know him to be ours*, we shall *glory in*

[1] 2 Tim. i. 12.

him, and *glorify him* in our body and in our spirit, which are *his*.

Finally, let us remember, that the disposition to glory in Christ, prepares us, more than any other frame of mind for the occupations and joys of heaven; and that glorying in the *cross* of Christ especially, prepares us for joining in the song of angels and blessed spirits above, who cry, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.' 'Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth.'

PART VII.

ADDITIONAL OFFICES, OF A MORE PERSONAL NATURE, WHICH THE REDEEMER SUSTAINS TOWARDS HIS PEOPLE.

ESSAY XLI.

THE SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL—THE GOOD SHEPHERD.

We have for some time been occupied, not so much in direct contemplation of the Redeemer, as in considering the spiritual blessings enjoyed by believers, in consequence of their union with him. We now return with pleasure to fix our regards more directly on his adorable Person and Character; proposing, in this, and four succeeding Essays, to view him under the tender and endearing appellations of Shepherd, Physician, Friend, Brother, and Husband.

'A Pastor, or Shepherd, signifies one who takes care of 'a flock of sheep, not only that they feed in good pasture, 'but that they be not torn by wild beasts, or hurt any 'other way. It is spoken *of God*, who performs the of- 'fice of a faithful Shepherd to his people, by *leading*, '*feeding*, *preserving*, and *healing* them;[1] and *of Christ*, 'who not only exposed and adventured his life, but also

[1] Ps. xxiii.

'willingly laid it down for his sheep, and who takes the 'charge, care, and oversight of them, to dispense all 'things necessary for their welfare. Christ Jesus per- 'forms all the offices of a tender and faithful SHEPHERD 'towards his people, carrying himself with great wisdom, 'condescension, and compassion, to every one of them, 'according to their several capacities and infirmities. 'He *feeds* them by his *word*, *Spirit*, *grace*, *fulness*, *re-* '*demption*, *ordinances*, and *providences*.'[1]

The office of Shepherd was, in the primitive ages, more important and honourable, and therefore more strikingly emblematic of the Saviour, than it can be in modern times. In the Patriarchal age, a man's riches consisted chiefly in the abundance of his flocks and herds; and they were tended, not by hirelings, as in the present day, but by the sons and daughters of the owner, or even by the owner himself. Since, then, we see so much patient watching, willing endurance of hardship, and venturing of life itself, in those who are but hired shepherds, how much more might be looked for in the son of the owner, or in the owner himself! Now, the flock which Christ feeds is his Father's flock, for he appointed him to be his Shepherd: it is his own flock, for he has purchased it with his own blood.

The passages of Scripture to which our attention is chiefly called by this title are the following:—Ps. xxiii.; lxxx. 1; Is. xl. 11; liii. 6; Ezek. xxxiv.; Micah v. 4; Zechariah xiii. 7; Luke xv. 4–6; John x. 11–16, and 26–30; xxi. 15–17; Heb. xiii. 20; 1 Pet. ii. 25; v. 4; Rev. vii. 17.

These passages are all so beautifully simple, and so mutually illustrative, that nothing is wanted but an attentive comparison of them one with another, to form

[1] Cruden.

an affecting and impressive picture of 'the Good,' 'the Great,' 'the Chief Shepherd;' of the wonders of his Person, the excellences of his character, the situation of his sheep, and the manner in which he performs towards them his office of Pastor.

Let us then collect some of the leading truths to be gathered from these Scriptures, relative to the Good Shepherd. First, we would remark, that as no office of Christ more obviously requires him to be Divine, so in no office is his Divinity more clearly revealed. Our Shepherd is 'the Lord,' 'the Lord God,' 'He that dwelleth between the cherubims,' 'The everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.'[1]

But, it being necessary, for the discharge of this arduous office, that the agent be human as well as divine, these same Scriptures teach us, for our comfort, that the Shepherd of Israel is Man, as well as the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts;[2] that although, in essential dignity, he reigned from everlasting, the independant and self-existent Jehovah, he, nevertheless, took upon him the form of a servant, and became Shepherd to the Father, his Servant David;[3] that although he himself was God over all, he was to stand and feed (or rule) the flock of God, 'in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God.'[4]

We see clearly predicted, in the texts referred to, the sufferings to which the Good Shepherd must be exposed, not only from the enemies of his flock, but from their just and holy Owner, from whom they had strayed. The Lord of Hosts himself commands the sword to awake against his Shepherd, and smite him. But we see also that the Good Shepherd voluntarily laid down his life

[1] Ps. xxiii. 1; Is. xl. 10; Ps. lxxx. 1; Is. xl. 28.
[2] Zech. xiii. 7. [3] Ezek. xxxvii. 24, 25. [4] Micah v. 4.

for the sheep; that he had power to lay it down, and power to take it again; and that he was, for this voluntary sacrifice of himself, the object of special love to his Father;[1] in proof of which, he brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep.[2] After he rose again, we find that our Shepherd committed the care of his flock to subordinate pastors, to feed them under his direction, and after his example;[3] still reserving to himself the name and office of Chief Shepherd,[4] and promising to appear again in this world, to reward his faithful servants, and destroy all his and their enemies.

Many truths concerning the sheep of Christ are also to be gathered from these Scriptures. We see that they are all by nature alienated from God, their rightful Owner;[5] and, though destitute of all real comfort, and exposed to continual dangers, while at a distance from him, that they have neither power nor inclination to return to the fold, but must be brought back by the arm of Omnipotence.[6] We see, that even when brought back, they are prone to wander again, each in his own way, and are quite ignorant as to the path they should take, and the food that is best for them; that they are, therefore, always dependant on Christ, for the supply of all their wants, for protection in every danger, and guidance in every perplexity.[7]

Especially, we see here, how carefully, tenderly, and effectually, our Lord Jesus discharges his office of Pastor; how faithfully he watches over the Church, and every member of it, leading, restoring, and satisfying the souls of his people, and dispensing to each of them those

[1] John x. 17, 18. [2] Heb. xiii. 20. [3] John xxi. 15–17.
[4] 1 Pet. v. 4. [5] Is. liii. 6. [6] Luke xv. 4–6.
[7] Ps. xxiii.

gifts of nature, those advantages of Providence, those means of grace, and those influences of the Holy Ghost, which are needful in their respective circumstances. His constant care is to promote their spiritual health, vigour, growth, and comfort; and their eternal safety he declares to be infallible, secured by the united power of the Father and himself. 'They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.'[1] We see here, also, the mutual fellowship and affection that subsists between Christ and his people, and the obedience which they render to his word, Spirit, and example; for he knows them, and they know him; they hear his voice, and follow him.[2]

In all ages, Immanuel has been the Shepherd of Israel; but he was not fully invested with this office till after his death, resurrection, and exaltation. In one respect, he is a striking contrast to all merely human pastors, viz. that whereas *their* labours and usefulness terminate at their death, *his* death was the necessary introduction to his most valuable services to the flock. For, by dying, he not only defeated and destroyed the enemies of his sheep, but procured for them the best possible nourishment, his own flesh and blood, and the best possible guidance, his Holy Spirit; and by dying, also, he obtained authority to dispense, out of his own fulness, all things needful for them in time and in eternity.

But, that we may better appreciate this encouraging office of our Redeemer, let us view, more in detail, his treatment of 'the people of his pasture, the sheep of his hand.' The first thing he has to do is to 'search and

[1] John x. 28–30. [2] John x. 14, 27.

seek out' his sheep, for they have 'wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill.' 'When he hath found' one of these silly wanderers, he does not merely invite and advise it to return to the fold. No, he 'lays it on his shoulder,' and brings it back; and then calls on his friends in earth and in heaven to rejoice with him, for he has found his sheep which was lost. How safe and happy is the sheep now! the object of its good Shepherd's constant attention and tender care!

'How can it want if He provide?
'Or lose its way with such a guide?'

The lambs are the objects of special care to the Good Shepherd. He gathers them with his arm when on the brink of ruin, carries them in his bosom[1] when benumbed or weary, and commends them to the peculiar kindness of the under-shepherds.[2] But his tender compassion, wisdom, and power, are equally exerted in behalf of every part of his flock; and his skill is wonderfully displayed in assigning to all of them the pasture best suited to their constitution, and in rendering every spot salubrious to them, even those which naturally appear the least so. Some of his sheep he leads beside 'the waters of quietness,'[3] and makes them to lie down in green pastures most of their lives; others he leads by steep and rugged paths, over the high mountain, where they are exposed to many a chilling blast and wintry storm, and are forced to crop the scanty herbage from the rock. But, in the case of all the sheep, this promise is fulfilled, 'He that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them.'[4] Those bred on the mountain are often more hardy and vigorous, than those which lie down in 'the pastures of

[1] Is. xl. 11. [2] John xxi. 15–17. [3] Ps. xxiii. 2; margin. [4] Is. xlix. 10.

tender grass,'[1] and exhibit more manifestly the power and wisdom of the Shepherd.

We remarked, a little ago, how *safe* and *happy* were the sheep, as soon as they were brought into the fold. True, their eternal happiness is secure; for the Good Shepherd has himself declared, 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish.' And they enjoy more or less of happiness, from the moment they enter the fold. Yet they are not exempted from temporary alarms, dangers, and distresses, otherwise there would be no room for the exercise of some of the tenderest offices of their Shepherd. The truth is, they are still poor, silly creatures, prone to wander, though not allowed finally to stray; exposed to the attacks of wild beasts, though never mortally wounded; and liable to innumerable infirmities and sicknesses, though their sickness is 'not unto death.' There is, therefore, continual need of the Shepherd's vigilance and kindness, to bring again that which was driven away, to bind up that which was broken, and to strengthen that which was sick.[2] Sometimes, indeed, the sheep have grievous falls, so as to break some of their bones,[3] and fill them with sore anguish. Sometimes one of them is so near being devoured by the roaring Lion, that the Shepherd has to come and deliver it out of his mouth. This is not owing to any want of vigilance on the part of the Good Shepherd; but to the heedlessness, disobedience, and fool-hardiness of the sheep; to their rashness, in venturing too near the edge of precipices, and the haunts of the beasts of prey. Even these melancholy cases, however, are, by the wisdom of the Shepherd, turned into occasions of good, both to the sufferers themselves, and to the rest of the flock.

And oh! how astonishing are his patience, forbearance

[1] Ps. xxiii. 2; margin. [2] Ezek. xxxiv. 16. [3] Ps. li. 8.

and loving-kindness, towards his erring sheep! How mercifully does he restore them again; healing the wounds they have brought upon themselves, nourishing them again with rich pasture, refreshing them again with streams of living water, and leading them again in the paths of righteousness, for his own Name's sake.

The flock of Christ, however, do not remain long in the wilderness, where so many dangers abound. More fertile plains await them, in a better Country; where no ravenous beast shall roam, where none of the sheep shall ever be sick, nor one of them wander a step out of the way. The same blessed Shepherd will be over them in that Land; not to deliver them out of dangers, for that will no longer be necessary; but to bestow on them the abundant delights of the heavenly Country: 'for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters.'[1]

In order to reach that blissful shore, every one of the sheep must cross a narrow, but dark valley; and, in spite of all the joys they expect on the other side, this valley appears very formidable to the poor timorous creatures. None of their companions can go along with them through it, nor return to give a report of it to those on this side. The Good Shepherd himself, however, has passed through this valley, and accompanies every one of his sheep in their passage through it. With his rod and his staff he supports and comforts them; and although many of them very much dread the valley, while looking at it from a distance, most of them 'fear no evil,' when actually entering it. They depart in peace, many of them in lively hope and triumphant joy; anticipating that great decisive day, when He who has been their

[1] Rev. vii. 17.

Shepherd shall appear as the Judge of quick and dead, and shall own them for his sheep,[1] his valued flock, whom he purchased with his own blood, and whom he will set on his right hand for ever.

If, from the keeper of sheep, we turn to the pastors that feed God's people, to the shepherds of immortal souls, we have an emblem of Christ, still more true and more delightful. Let us then think of the Chief Shepherd, as often as we see a faithful human pastor, bearing his image, and treading in his steps. Do we see 'a man of like passions with ourselves,' assiduously feeding his flock 'with knowledge and understanding,' labouring for their welfare day and night with indefatigable perseverance, administering those holy ordinances which, through God's blessing, nourish, satisfy, and strengthen believers, arouse the careless, and convert the sinner?—Do we see him following up in private his public labour; watching, with peculiar tenderness, the young and the newly-converted; sympathising with and counselling the afflicted and tempted; confirming the wavering, encouraging the timid, warning the rebellious, reproving backsliders, and building up the faithful?—Let us remember that we view, here, but a faint representation of the Good Shepherd, and let us raise our admiring regards from the instrument, to the Divine Agent, from the servant, to his Lord. And, while we fervently thank God for giving us pastors after his own heart; while we feel towards them, especially towards any one of them who was the instrument of our own conversion or revival, a mingled reverence, gratitude, and affection, which can be better felt than described; Oh! should not these emotions be unspeakably stronger to-

[1] Mat. xxv. 32.

wards the great 'Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,' the Lord Jesus Christ!

How immensely important is the question, Whether or not we belong to Christ's little flock? For, if not, instead of enjoying all the benefits flowing from his Almighty Guardianship, we are exposed, defenceless, to the rage and subtlety of Satan, are liable every moment to fall into the dangerous pit-falls of error and of crime, and to be plunged by death into the unfathomable abyss of never-ending woe.

If we are desirous to ascertain this point, let us inquire, Whether we have experienced any change so great as that implied in being found when lost, and brought in when wandering? This change, indeed, is in some cases very gradual, yet in most, it is perceptible: and if we are not conscious of having once been wanderers, by nature, by habit, and by inclination, it is to be feared we are wanderers still.

Let us also inquire, Whether our dispositions and habits are like those of Christ's sheep,—gentle, tractable, confiding, and submissive; especially, whether we resemble them in those points whereby the Good Shepherd has himself described them; viz. that they know him, hear his voice, and follow him? As the Good Shepherd intimately knows every one of his sheep, so is he known of them; not by general report, merely, nor by the commendations of others; but by their own personal experience of his faithfulness and compassion, of his forbearance, wisdom, power, and love. This experimental knowledge of Christ cannot be described in words; but, that we may ascertain whether we have it or not, let us inquire again, Do we expect, listen for, and hear, the voice of Christ, speaking to us in his Word, his Providences, and by his

Spirit? Even the inferior animals know the voice of their keeper: it would be strange, then, if the sheep of Christ did not know His voice.

But they do know it, for they follow him. He has gone before them, in 'the path of righteousness;' and they are willing to follow him 'whithersoever he goeth,' whether 'through evil report or good report.' Knowing their own ignorance, and folly, and confiding in his wisdom, power, and grace, they rejoice that they are not left to choose their own pasture, but that their Shepherd chooses it for them. They are anxious to keep close beside their Shepherd; following hard after him,[1] fixing their eye upon his eye,[2] that he may guide them with it; listening to his faintest whisper, relishing his pleasant pastures, and fearful lest they should turn aside from the footsteps of his flock; and when they do turn aside, as too frequently happens, looking to Him alone to restore them.

If, after this examination, we find any solid ground to hope, that we are indeed members of Christ's little flock; how fervent should be our gratitude to the blessed Shepherd, who

> 'Found us wandering far from God,
> 'And brought us to his chosen fold.'

Had he not brought us back, we should have wandered farther and farther from safety and from happiness, from heaven, and from God. And oh! we may ask, Why were *we* found, while multitudes are left to wander on and perish? No reason can be given, but this, 'Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.'

Finally, as by the mercy of God, we Gentiles have been brought into one fold with his ancient flock; so let

[1] Ps. lxiii. 8. [2] Ps. xxxii. 8.

us joyfully expect, and ardently pray for, the time, when 'He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock;'[1] when 'there shall be one fold, under one Shepherd;' when 'the Lord God will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land:—and one King shall be king to them all.'[2]

To these glorious ends, let us importunately pray, 'Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock; Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.'

[1] Jer. xxxi. 10. [2] Ezek. xxxvii. 21–25.

ESSAY XLII.

PHYSICIAN.

Every office of the Lord Jesus Christ implies a corresponding character or condition of his people. His assuming the office of Shepherd implies that they, like sheep, are helpless, dependant, erring creatures: his assuming the office of Physician implies that they are sick; as Jesus himself has said, 'They that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.'[1]

We remarked, of the title Shepherd, that it would be a more striking emblem of the Redeemer, in the primitive ages than it is in modern times: but the reverse appears in the title now before us. The term Physician would not, perhaps, convey to the mind of a pious Israelite, so many soothing and touching associations, as it does to that of a Christian, in the present day.

In all ages, and under every dispensation, since the Fall, sickness and disease have been sent by God for the punishment of sin, and for the purification of the soul; and have been removed by him in his own time and way. The faithful, in all ages, have been ready to acknowledge, 'The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the grave, and bringeth up.'[2] 'He

[1] Mat. ix. 12. [2] 1 Sam. ii. 6.

maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his hands make whole.'[1] But, while the infliction and the cure of sickness have both proceeded from God, equally under all dispensations; he has been pleased to vary the modes of conveying them, under different dispensations; making bare his holy arm as the immediate Agent, under one; and employing instruments and subordinate agents, under another.

Now, the Israelites of old were under a dispensation of the former description. It was a part of the national covenant, made with them by Jehovah, that he would take away all sickness from them, and put upon them none of the evil diseases of Egypt, as long as they continued obedient; but that if disobedient, he would make all those diseases to cleave unto them, and every sickness and every plague.[2] They were under a dispensation of temporal retribution, and miraculous interposition. Their diseases were often sent as the instantaneous judgment of God, for some particular offence; and were removed, as instantaneously, on their repentance, or in answer to prayer. We read many instances of this, both in individuals, such as Miriam, Gehazi, Uzziah; and in the nation generally, as in the 'fiery serpents,' and the plague inflicted for 'numbering the people.' The leprosy, which, in its worst form, seems to have been known only to the Israelites, was treated peculiarly as a disease sent by God, and to be cured by him alone. Among all the laws respecting it, we find not a single remedy to be used for its prevention or cure. The *priests* were the only *physicians* consulted. They examined the patients, judged of the virulence of the disorder, watched the progress of its removal, and pronounced the reality

[1] Job v. 18. [2] Deut. vii. 15; xxviii. 60, 61.

of its eure; and when that was complete, offered saerifices to God, thus aseribing to Him all the glory.

When, to this consideration, of the eeonomy under which they were plaeed, we add, the small progress the aneient Hebrews had made in natural philosophy and science, it is fair to infer, that they were not much aceustomed to traee their sieknesses to physical eauses, nor to consult physieians when siek. And, although we have reason to eonelude, that the healing art was not altogether unknown or unpractised by them; that natural substanees, sueh as 'The Balm of Gilead,' were applied by them for healing purposes; and that the use of means, in dependanee on God's blessing, could never be unlawful; yet, in the only instanee recorded in the Old Testament, of applieation to physieians for the eure of bodily disorder, a eensure is implied. 'Asa was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exeeeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physieians.'[1]

We, who live under the Gospel dispensation, are very differently circumstaneed, regarding sickness and its eure. Our maladies, though sent in Fatherly love to believers, are still the effeets and punishments of sin, as were those of ancient Israel: but they often eome upon us gradually and imperceptibly; and we cannot, in general, traee them to any one partieular sin. Our recovery from sickness is as truly the gift of God, as were the miraculous eures of the Israelites. But, instead of healing us with a word, or commanding us, in order to our eure, to burn ineense, to offer burnt-offerings, or wash seven times in Jordan, the Lord generally heals us by the instrumentality of physicians and medicines. Sinee the cessation of miraeles, God has

[1] 2 Chron. xvi. 12.

mercifully instructed men in various sciences, whereby the diseases of the human frame are greatly mitigated and cured; and those sciences, gathering strength from the accumulating experience of each succeeding age, have attained a proficiency, a depth, and an accuracy, which unassisted reason could never have reached. Innumerable are the substances, collected from all the tribes of earth, and mingled in infinite varieties of proportion and combination, which are made to yield their properties to the cure of human disorders; innumerable are the alleviations which the skilful physician has in store; wonderful the cures he is enabled to perform. And when to skill is added benevolence, and to benevolence, Christian prineiple, the physician is one of the most valued characters in the world. He is endeared to thousands, by his kind and inestimable services. He has access to the family cirele, in the hour of bereavement, and during all the alternations of hope and fear, which precede that hour. His soothing attentions make their way into 'the house of mourning,' when those of other friends can scarcely gain admittance; and he has the most favourable opportunities for dropping a 'word in season' to the sick, the dying, and the afflicted. No profession, in short, affords such ample scope for imitating Him who 'went about doing good,' except that of the spiritual physician, the physician of souls. It forms, therefore, a very delightful emblem of Christ, to his people.

But, if the Hebrews were less acquainted with the instrumental healer, they were, for that very reason, less tempted than we are, to aseribe to second causes, what is due to the Great First Cause; and more practically mindful that it was the Lord who healed them. Under this character, he revealed himself to them, at the waters of Marah; eonverting bitter and poisonous

streams into refreshing draughts, that they might thenceforth know him by this consoling name, 'The Lord that healeth thee.'[1]

In the prophetic intimations of Messiah's earthly sojourn, his power of miraculous healing formed a conspicuous feature, joined with testimonies to his Divinity. 'Behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped: then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.'[2] When Jesus came, therefore, and fulfilled so richly these predictions, the Jews were without excuse, for not confessing him as their Messiah and their God. If, in any one character, while on earth, he shone more brightly than another, it was in this character of Physician. 'He healed all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.' And it is remarkable, that most of the diseases cured by Jesus, were such as are incurable by human skill or natural remedies; the leper, the paralytic, the man blind from his birth, the deaf, and the dumb, alike experienced his healing power; not to mention his casting out evil spirits, who, in that age, seem, by Divine permission, to have exercised a powerful influence, for the infliction of bodily disorders. Nor was it necessary that the Divine Physician should see or examine, the objects of his mercy: he perfectly knew their symptoms; and a word from him, spoken at a distance, or a touch of the hem of his garment, secretly stolen, was sufficient to cure the most inveterate and long-continued maladies. The utmost skill of human physicians cannot finally rescue their patients from the hand of death; but Jesus raised his patients even from the

[1] Exod. xv. 23–26. [2] Is. xxxv. 4–6.

grave. And his sovereign authority to rebuke bodily sickness was still further manifested, by his delegating that authority to his apostles and disciples.

Thus far, we have considered only the sickness of the body, and Christ as the Healer of it. But the soul has its sicknesses as well as the body, and these are as much more dreadful and dangerous, as eternity is longer than time. 'The polluted nature of man (says Leighton), is 'no other but a bundle of desperate diseases. It were 'a large task to name our spiritual maladies; how much 'more, severally to unfold their natures. Did we see it, 'no infirmary or hospital was ever so full of loathsome 'and miserable spectacles as, in a spiritual sense, our 'wretched nature is, in any one of us apart. How 'much more, when multitudes of us are met together? 'But our evils are hid from us, and we perish miserably 'in a dream of happiness. That makes up and com-'pletes our wretchedness, that we feel it not, with our 'other diseases, and this makes it worse still.'

But, blessed be God, we have an infallible Physician for our souls, even the same Jesus who healed every disease of the body, and who did so for this purpose, among others, that he might encourage us to apply to him for the healing of our souls. He is the only Physician of Souls, the Physician in Gilead, who, by his blood and Spirit, recovers the health of God's people. As Messiah, it was promised that he should 'bind up the broken-hearted,' 'heal the broken in heart, and bind up their wounds,' and that, 'by his stripes,' his people should be 'healed;' that he should 'arise' unto them 'with healing in his wings.'[1]

Had any doubt remained as to the meaning of these,

[1] Jer. viii. 22; Is. lxi. 1; Ps. cxlvii. 3; Is. liii. 5; Mal. iv. 2.

and many other prophetic intimations, our Lord himself has removed it, by his own assumption of the title and office now before us. 'They that are whole (said Jesus), have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'[1]

Let us, then, with all humility and reverence, and with ardour, such as our own urgent need should excite, approach the study of our heavenly Physician; viewing him in his Person, in the way in which he obtained this important office, and in the manner wherein he executes it.

His *Person* is such as should engage and command our strongest confidence. It is Divine and Human in one. Who but an Infinite, Omnipotent, and Omniscient Being could discover and cure the diseases of millions at one time, and this throughout all ages; prescribing to each individual, the atmosphere, the nourishment, and the medicine, required for his peculiar case? Again, who but a Human being could enter into all the pains, and griefs, and sicknesses, to which our bodies and souls are alike exposed?

To obtain this office, then, and to qualify himself for it, the Son of God became Man; 'himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.' He was wounded, bruised, and pierced, both in body and spirit, till at length he 'poured out his soul unto death.' Thus he acquired from the Father the credentials of his office; and thus he acquired the most entire acquaintance with all the feelings of his patients, both corporeal and mental, the feeling of remorse alone excepted.

We shall now consider, more at length, the *manner in which our blessed Physician discharges his office.*

[1] Mark ii. 17.

It is a wise and merciful ordination of Providence, in our bodily frame, that most of its diseases are accompanied with pain, which indicates their seat and cause, and directs the physician to a suitable remedy. But this is not always the case. Some of the most dangerous maladies are unattended by pain: they may be making fatal inroads on the constitution: some of the vitals may be on the point of ceasing to perform their functions; while yet the man appears to his friends, and even to himself, to be in perfect health. So is it with the worst diseases of the soul. And, if it be melancholy to see one on the bed of death, unconscious of his danger, and talking of what he will do when he recovers, how much more melancholy is it to see a soul, sick of mortal disease, and yet refusing to believe it is sick; yea, boasting that it has no 'need of healing;' and consequently rejecting the counsel of the great Physician!

It is one of the most precious parts of his character, however, that he does not wait till his patients come to him of their own accord. He knows they cannot do so. He, therefore, goes into the world, as into a country ravaged by the Plague, and thence selects inmates for his great Hospital, the Church on earth. He then places them under the superintendence of his ministering servants, and supplies them with every thing conducive to returning health.

The first medicine given to the patients is generally a very nauseous one,—*the sense of their true condition.* The effect of this is to show them that, while they dreamed of health, they were covered with a *leprosy* which rendered them loathsome to God, and excluded them from all real participation of his ordinances, or communion with himself and his people:—that, in respect of heavenly things, they had been blind, deaf, dumb, lame,

and lunatic; and that, had the Divine Physician not interposed in their behalf, they must have 'perished everlastingly.' This medicine heartily received, the worst of the danger is past; for the patient becomes willing to submit to all the rules of the Hospital, to take all the remedies prescribed, however disagreeable, and to expect a cure from the Great Physician alone. But when this medicine is but partially received, when Ephraim sees his sickness, and Judah his wound,[1] but they see not the only efficacious cure, they then fly to physicians of no value; they try to prove that their disease is not so bad as it is represented, and that, by remedies of their own invention, they will soon get better; or they have recourse to palliatives, drawn from human infirmity, from the strength of temptation, from counterbalancing good deeds,—and, when all these things combined, fail to assuage the pangs of conscience, they apply the mercy of God, mingled with the former ingredients. Yet cannot these balms heal them, nor cure them of their wounds. There is but One Balm, and but One Physician, but One Way, whereby any can be healed. It is this,—'Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.'[2] After spending all that we have on other physicians, we shall be nothing better, but rather grow worse, until we come to Jesus, crying, 'Unclean, unclean.' 'Thou Son of David, have mercy upon us.' And if we can say no more than 'Lord, *if thou wilt*, thou canst make me clean,' he will put forth his hand, saying, '*I will, be thou clean.*'

After the *Leprosy of Unconversion* has been cured, the patient is pronounced *clean* by the Great Physician, being clothed in the white robe of imputed righteousness,

[1] Hosea v. 13. [2] Hosea vi. 1.

cleansed from the guilt of sin, and, in a measure, cured of the love of sin. Still, however, many virulent diseases retain their hold within the patient, and at times break out visibly. Pride, vanity, uncharitableness, envy, indolence, carnal security, worldly mindedness, unbelief, and many other dangerous maladies, lurk in his constitution, and require the unremitting care of the Physician to subdue and eradicate them. Fully aware of all this, the Good Physician visits his Hospital daily, hourly, that he may examine his patients, and treat them accordingly. He feels for every sufferer, as for the apple of his eye. His tenderness infinitely surpasses that of any of his servants. Yet, at times, He appears less compassionate than they do. When one of them would administer a strong cordial to a fainting soul, or pour balm into a bleeding wound, His superior skill sees far different remedies needful. The patient, though low, needs to be brought lower still; the wound, though smarting, must not be healed so soon, lest it rankle beneath the surface, and corrupt the whole frame. The Physician is too wise to heal the wounds of his patients 'slightly.'[1] He, therefore, probes them to the quick, pressing still harder upon that part which shrinks from his touch, till the patient is often forced to cry out in anguish of spirit. But when the wound is in a safe state for closing, O how soothing, how comfortable is the balm he applies, that BALM of wondrous value, and universal efficacy, his own most precious BLOOD! Or, when the crisis of the fever is past, when the wasted frame seems just sinking, and all other help is proved totally vain, how wonderfully does the Divine Healer manifest his power, wisdom, and love! He 'revives the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.' He pours

[1] Jer. vi. 14.

'oil and wine' into the bleeding wounds, and binds them up in a manner that none of his servants can do.

The recovery of the patients, in this Hospital, varies much in rapidity and in completeness. Complete recovery indeed, is not promised, until they leave the Hospital, and gain access to the 'leaves' of a certain tree,[1] which grows in a better Country, and which, along with the more genial climate of that Country, will give perfect health and immortal vigour, to every one that touches them. But the patients would enjoy much better health than they do, were they more careful in following the written directions, given to each of them on entering the House of the Great Physician; directions adapted to the cases of all, and which the Physician is ever ready to explain and apply to every one in particular. There are many general directions applicable to all the patients, such as, 'Watch and pray always;' 'Repent, and believe the Gospel;' 'Be not afraid, only believe;' 'Draw nigh unto God;' 'Resist the devil;' 'Keep thy heart with all diligence;' 'Love not the world;' 'Set your affections on things above;' 'Consider your ways;' 'See that ye walk circumspectly;' 'Search the Scriptures;' 'Pray without ceasing;' 'Prepare to meet thy God;' 'Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God,'—with many others.

Some of the patients, by diligently following these directions, and by entrusting themselves simply and unreservedly into their good Physician's hands, make wonderfully quick recoveries. Others, again, retard their own amendment, by inattention to the written rules and the private counsel of the Physician, and by want of confidence in his skill and faithfulness. Forgetting their own extreme liability to disease, they venture into infected atmospheres, and do those things which they

[1] Rev. xxii. 2.

know have injured them in times past. Thus they bring on dangerous relapses, which make them doubt whether their cure was ever begun, and whether the Good Physician has any thoughts of kindness towards them; and they are ashamed to apply to him again, having wilfully disobeyed his kind orders, and brought misery upon themselves. Sometimes he leaves them for a while, to feel all the bitterness of their condition; but if they have indeed been once under his treatment, and if he has undertaken their cure, he will not fail to perfect it. He comes with the same precious Balm in his hand, which he applied to them at first, and by it restores health unto them, and heals them of their wounds.[1]

A large proportion of the patients, though preserved from any violent relapse, remain in a state of weakness and languor, lose the keen relish they formerly had for the provisions allotted them by their kind Physician, and can enjoy but little of the sweet repose he intends for them. They grow dull and lethargic, incapable of enjoying active pursuits, or exercising with pleasure the functions of restored health. These patients deprive themselves of much comfort, and do discredit to their Physician. But he has tonics and stimulants for them, which, from time to time, he administers, in order to strengthen and revive them; and the growing experience of every patient is, a deeper loathing of his disease, a more grateful, hearty reliance on the skill, faithfulness, and love of his Physician, and a gradual advancement towards perfect health.

We have represented Christ, the Great Physician of Souls, as *selecting* his patients out of the world; and this we find undeniable, according to our views of Divine Truth. But it is equally undeniable, that he freely re-

[1] Jer. xxx. 17.

ceives, and cordially welcomes, *all* who come to him, and that none are excluded on account of the inveteracy of their disease; for the very object of his coming was 'to call *sinners* to repentance.' Delay not, then, O sinner, to approach the blessed, the only Healer of your soul. Wait not till you grow better, for that you will never do at a distance from him. Come and be healed by the stripes of the beloved Son of God. In reference to those *stripes*, we have the following beautiful exhortation from Leighton, with which we shall conclude this Essay.

'Turn your thoughts, every one of you, to consider 'this. You that are not healed, that you may be healed; 'and you that are, apply it still to perfect the cure, in 'that part where it is gradual, and not complete; and 'for the *ease* you have found, bless and love him who 'endured so much *uneasiness* to that end. There is a 'sweet mixture of sorrow and joy in contemplating these 'stripes; sorrow sure by sympathy, that they were his 'stripes; and joy, that they were our healing. Chris-'tians are too little mindful and sensible of this, and it 'may be, somewhat guilty of that great fault, men-'tioned in Hosea xi. 3, "They knew not that I healed 'them."'[1]

[1] Leighton on 1 Peter ii. 24.

ESSAY XLIII.

FRIEND—FRIEND OF SINNERS.

Formally to define the word friend, would be almost to insult the understandings and the hearts of my readers. For where is the mind so dark, or the heart so cold, as not to brighten and kindle at the name of friend? Where is the human being so desolate, as never to have known the worth of friendship? General, however, as is the use of the term friend, and common as is the enjoyment of friendship, in certain forms and degrees, a real friend is far from a common, it is a very rare, possession; because there are comparatively few minds susceptible of friendship, in its real and exalted sense.

Many have been the eulogiums bestowed on friendship by moralists and by poets; much is spoken in its praise by men of the world; and many have been the deeds of heroism, of disinterestedness, and kindness, which mere natural friendship has produced. Still, there is but one kind of friendship that deserves the name; it is that which subsists between the children of God; who, by his grace, are made 'of one heart and of one soul;' whose bond of union is mutual trust in one

Almighty Saviour, whose united aim is the advancement of his glory, and whose union, therefore, being founded not on the perishing things of time, but on the enduring things of eternity, shall stand the shock of death, and ripen to perfection beyond the grave.

Would we, then, understand the nature of true friendship, we must study it as described in the word of God; and here we find it vividly portrayed, both in general principles, and by particular examples.

'Solomon gives the qualities of a true friend: "A friend 'loveth at all times;"[1] not only in prosperity, but also in 'adversity. "There is a friend that sticketh closer than 'a brother;"[2] he is more hearty in the performance of all 'friendly offices. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend;"[3] 'he reproves and rebukes when he sees any thing amiss; 'his sharpest reproofs proceed from an upright and truly 'loving and faithful soul. "Ointment and perfume re-'joice the heart; so doth the sweetness of a man's friend 'by hearty counsel;"[4] he is known by his good and 'faithful counsel, as well as by his seasonable rebukes; 'by such counsel as comes from his very heart and soul, 'and is the language of his most inward and serious 'thoughts. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpen-'eth the countenance of his friend;"[5] the company and 'conversation of a friend is refreshing and reviving to a 'person, who, when alone, is sad, dull, and inactive.'[6]

From these descriptions it appears, that the qualities most valuable in a friend are, *constancy in affection*, *faithfulness in counsel and reproof*, and *wisdom to direct that constancy and that faithfulness*. If to these qualities is added *power to assist and relieve*, the character is perfect; our friend combines the threefold offices of an af-

[1] Prov. xvii. 17. [2] Prov. xviii. 24. [3] Prov. xxvii. 6.
[4] Prov. xxvii. 9. [5] Prov. xxvii. 17. [6] Cruden.

fectionate and confidential *companion*, a wise and faithful *monitor*, and a generous *benefactor*. It is rarely, however, that we meet with all these qualities combined in an earthly friend. In one, perhaps, we find warm affection and tender sympathy, without much wisdom to counsel, or power to assist; in another, we find prudent counsel, and both the will and the power to do us good offices; but still we find not that congeniality of sentiment, which secures our confidence, and imparts its own in return,—that free interchange of thought and feeling, which forms the greatest charm of friendship.

Where, then, shall we find a friend who possesses all these valuable qualities in perfection? whose love can never abate, whose wisdom can never err, whose faithfulness can never fail, and whose power is sufficient to aid us in every time of need? The answer is obvious. There is but ONE BEING in the whole universe to whom this description can apply.

But how can *we* dare to expect friendship with God? How can friendship subsist between beings so opposite in character and aims, and so immensely separated by nature and situation, as the holy God, in heaven, and unholy, sin-loving man, on earth? Are we not all, by nature, *enemies* to God in our minds, by wicked works? And is he not pledged, by the honour of his government, to take vengeance on his enemies? Besides, where there exists such infinite disparity of nature, how can any thing like friendship be found? These objections would, it is true, have seemed insuperable to human or angelic wisdom; but they formed no barrier to the power and wisdom of Jehovah. Blessed be his name, he has contrived and executed a mighty scheme, whereby his enemies are transformed into friends. 'When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.'

The atonement, made by the blood of Christ, and applied to the conscience by the Spirit of Christ, reconciles God and sinners; and the Holy Ghost, shed upon their hearts, changes their dispositions from hatred to love, from impurity to holiness, from the pursuits of frivolity and vanity, to zeal for the glory of God; so that they are, in some measure, conformed to the image of their Maker, and capacitated for enjoying friendly intercourse with him. Even the obstacle arising from disparity of nature, has been most wonderfully overcome, by the Incarnation of the Son of God. By assuming human nature, in union with the Divine, God has encouraged us, not only to reverence him, as our infallible *Monitor*, and to adore him, as our munificent *Benefactor* and powerful *Deliverer;* but to approach and hold fellowship with him, as our tender, sympathising, and most confidential *Companion;* thus combining in himself all the qualities of a perfect Friend.

It was only by virtue of the great atonement, afterward to be made, that believers, under the Old Dispensation, were admitted to the honourable distinction of friends of God. 'This title is principally given to Abra-'ham, as in 2 Chron. xx. 7, "And gavest it to Abra-'ham, thy friend for ever;" and in Is. xli. 8, "The seed 'of Abraham my friend." The Apostle James likewise 'makes mention of this, "And he was called the Friend 'of God." This title is given him, not only because God 'frequently appeared to him, conversed familiarly with 'him, and revealed secrets to him, saying, "Shall I hide 'from Abraham that thing which I do?" but also be-'cause he entered into a covenant of perpetual friendship 'both with him and his seed;[1] and especially, because 'he renewed the covenant with him upon the sacrificing

[1] Gen. xii. 2, 3, &c.

'of his Son Isaac, and confirmed it by an oath, and 'thereby admitted him to a nearer degree of friendship 'and communion.[1] And it is upon this trial of Abra-'ham's obedience, namely, the offering up of his son, 'that the Apostle James quotes the passage, where 'Abraham is called the Friend of God.'[2]

We justly entertain a high esteem of the distinguished honour thus conferred upon Abraham. But the Gospel presents views of friendship between God and man, still more astonishing and affecting. It tells us, that, in order to bring about this wonderful friendship, one of the Persons in the glorious Trinity descended to earth; not in transient visits, as heretofore, when he conversed with Abraham; but to sojourn for many years in human form, and in more than human suffering; that he actually received and welcomed the appellation, 'FRIEND OF SINNERS;'[3] nay, that he plainly called his disciples *friends;* saying, 'Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.'[4] In this verse we see a proof of the unreserved *confidence* wherewith the blessed Jesus treats his unworthy friends; and in the two verses preceding, we see the *measure* of his *love* towards them, and the *return of obedience* which he expects from them; 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'—'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.' 'And 'this title, friends, is not peculiar to the apostles only, 'but is common with them to all true believers; as they 'are all thus addressed by Christ, "Eat, O friends; drink, 'yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."'[5]

[1] Gen. xxii. 16, 17. [2] Cruden. [3] Luke vii. 34; v. 29–32.
[4] John xv. 13–15. [5] Cant. v. 1. Cruden.

We remarked, in the beginning of this Essay, that true friendship is represented in Scripture, by *example*, as well as by description. The most beautiful example of friendship, recorded there, or perhaps any where, is that of Jonathan and David. And although this can scarcely be called *typical* of the friendship that subsists between Christ and believers, it is yet, in many points, so touchingly *analogous* to that friendship, that a comparison of the two may aid our conceptions of the latter. But, before tracing the points of analogy, we must guard against error, by marking some essential points, wherein the two cases were directly opposed to each other. For instance, the danger to which David was exposed, was the envious, cruel, and unjust wrath of man: the danger to which the sinner is exposed, is the infinitely holy and just wrath of God. Whereas Jonathan saved his friend, by counteracting the design of his father; Jesus saves his friends, by co-operating in the design of his Father. Nor is it necessary for Jesus to appease his Father, and persuade him to be merciful to his friends, as Jonathan vainly endeavoured to appease Saul: the Father himself loveth the friends of the Son.[1] 'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'[2]

Bearing these things in mind, we may safely, and it is hoped profitably, borrow illustrations of the friendship shown by Christ to sinners, from that shown by Jonathan to David.

In one point of view, indeed, *David* was more emblematical of the *Saviour*, and *Jonathan* of the *sinner*; inasmuch as David was destined to rise to royal dignity, authority, and glory; and Jonathan humbly covenanted

[1] John xvi. 26, 27. [2] John iii. 16.

with him for his own protection, and that of his seed for ever. But the relative situations of the two friends, from the commencement of their friendship to its earthly termination, warrants us in representing Jonathan as the Counsellor and Benefactor, and David as indebted to him for counsel and benefits; all the protection was on one side, during the life of Jonathan, all the obligation on the other. One of the friends was of low origin, and exposed to imminent peril from the wrath of his sovereign; the other was son to that sovereign, and, by his rank and influence, had power to save his friend from the wrath of his father.

If the *relative situation* of Jonathan to his friend gave scope for the exercise of friendly offices, resembling those performed by Christ for his friends, *the virtues which adorned his friendship* were still more strikingly analogous to those of Jesus, and exactly fulfilled Solomon's description of a true friend. *His affection was ardent;* 'the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul;' and he openly testified that love, by arraying his friend in his own raiment, and clothing him with his own armour.[1] This was in the day of David's prosperity; but when the day of his affliction came, Jonathan proved himself 'a friend that loved at all times,' and 'a brother born for adversity.' When an order for David's destruction was issued by the king, and there was, as he himself expressed it, but a step between him and death; when the performance of any friendly office to him was sure, if detected, to draw down the violent displeasure of the monarch, the faithful Jonathan still held secret interviews with his friend, encouraged him to disclose to him the whole state of his affairs, to pour into his bosom all his perplexities and

[1] 1 Sam. xviii. 1–4.

fears,—and then, with prudence and wisdom he counselled him, and with promptitude and zeal he concerted measures for his deliverance.

But the most beautiful characteristic of Jonathan's friendship was its *disinterestedness*. He knew, that by saving the life of David, he was taking measures to cut off his own succession to the throne, besides drawing down upon himself the wrath of his father. But, being a true believer, and child of God, he cordially acquiesced in the Divine decree respecting David's exaltation, and invoked the Lord's blessing upon his reign. He, therefore, interceded with his father for him, endured for his sake ignominy and disgrace, and never intermitted his exertions, until his friend reached a place of safety.

The unreserved *confidence* with which Jonathan treated David, was another beautiful feature of his friendship. He communicated to him all the designs of his father towards him, and gave him secret tokens, understood by himself alone, of the result of his intercessions.[1]

Such tender affection and mutual confidence, between two friends, one of whom was so dependant on the other for safety, and so inferior to him in earthly rank and station, was surely a representation, though confessedly a faint one, of the friendship between Christ and the believer; and we are led to this application by several particulars in the story, which denote Jonathan's superiority. David, although admitted to the closest intimacy with him, called himself his *servant;* he *paid homage* to Jonathan, falling on his face to the ground, and bowing himself three times; he *received a blessing* from him; and Jonathan *promised to grant his largest requests.* Above all, *the covenant* entered into between the parties, although a mutual one, sworn by both of them in the name of

[1] 1 Sam. xix. 1–7; xx. throughout.

the Lord, *originated with Jonathan;* for David says, 'Thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the Lord with thee.'[1]

Thus Jonathan performed toward David all the offices of a true friend. He was to him a faithful *Monitor*, an affectionate *Companion*, a ready and powerful *Benefactor* and *Deliverer*. And so great was the support which David found in the society of this beloved friend, that a hasty interview with him, stolen in the wood of the wilderness, and a renewal of the covenant between them, was sufficient to *strengthen David's hand in God*.[2]

But, turning our eyes from this beautiful example of earthly friendship, let us fix them directly on Immanuel, the Friend of Sinners. And if our admiration has been justly excited by the constancy, tenderness, vigour, and disinterestedness of Jonathan's friendship, oh! what words can express the admiration due here! 'What admiration must have pervaded the hosts of heaven when 'a friendship was proposed between the object of their 'exalted adorations, and poor sinful men on earth!'[3]

With the Son of God this covenant originated: it never could have originated with man; for he is, by nature, the determined enemy of God; but, from all eternity, the delights of God the Son, the uncreated Wisdom, were with the sons of men.[4] For them he, for a season, resigned his heavenly throne; he laid aside the splendours of Deity, that he might array his unworthy friends with the princely robe of his righteousness, and clothe them with his spiritual armour. For them he endured all the insults and cruelty of men, all the rage and malice of Satan, and the dreadful wrath

[1] 1 Sam. xx. 8, 41, 42, 4, 8.
[2] 1 Sam. xxiii. 16–18.
[3] Scott on John xv. 13–15.
[4] Prov. viii. 31.

and curse of his heavenly Father. Every one who is historically acquainted with Jesus, knows how faithfully he discharged, while on earth, all the duties of friendship; how tender and sympathising he was in fellowship, how faithful in reproof, how bountiful in all acts of kindness and relief. And every one who is experimentally acquainted with him, knows that he is still the same,—that he

> 'Pursues in heaven the mighty plan,
> 'The Saviour and the Friend of man.'

O! how astonishing is the condescension of the King of kings, and Lord of lords! Had he, from the height of his heavenly throne, deigned to send down friendly messages, counsels, and gifts, by the hand of angels, to us his poor sinful creatures, our most devoted gratitude had been justly due. But, lo! he stoops to hold fellowship with us himself; and this, not for our advantage only, but for his own happiness, and the manifestation of his glory! For although, as God, his happiness is incapable of increase or diminution, yet, as Mediator, it is inseparable from that of his friends. All their concerns and interests are his; he is ready at all times to confer in secret with each one of them, to listen to their complaints of fear or danger, and to counsel them accordingly. He continually pleads with his Father in their behalf, and communicates to them secret tokens of his Father's purposes toward them,—whether there is 'peace to them and no hurt,' or if they must 'make haste, speed, and stay not.' Often, by a short interview with this adorable Friend, the faith of believers is revived, and their hand is strengthened in God. A renewal of their covenant with Jesus arms them for every coming trial and danger; and they delight in reminding him, that it was He who brought them into a covenant

of the Lord with him; that *they* did not first choose *him*, but that *he* chose *them*, therefore their covenant must be perpetual.

A blessed difference appears, in comparing our case, if we be friends of Jesus, with that of David. Whereas, in order to insure his safety, he was forced to part from his beloved friend and deliverer; our safety consists in cleaving close to our Friend. Nothing but our own fault can separate us from him at any time; and the larger our desires and petitions, the more he loves to grant them; for, in a far higher sense than that in which Jonathan could say it to David, he says to every one of his friends, 'Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.' 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do.'[1]

And what a blessed contrast are these two cases in another important respect. David lost his beloved Jonathan by early death; but our Jonathan can never die: and our own death, far from interrupting our intercourse with him, will open the way to intercourse unspeakably more delightful and intimate. All our interviews with Jesus here below, resemble, more or less, that last interview of David's with Jonathan in the wilderness of Ziph, being snatched in the middle of hurry and warfare. But hereafter there will be nothing to interrupt or alloy our enjoyment of his blessed society; for it is his gracious will, that those whom the Father has given him be with him where he is, that they may behold his glory, and not only behold, but share it! for hear his words of astonishing condescension, 'The glory which *Thou* hast given *me*, *I* have given *them*, that they may be one, even as we are one.' The full import of these words, Heaven alone can explain; but assuredly

[1] John xiv. 13.

they describe the Redeemer and his redeemed friends as formed into one vast and glorious society, whose harmony no coldness, reserve, or offence, shall ever break, and whose vastness shall not diminish, to any individual, the full enjoyment of Him who is its Centre and Sun.

But, before quitting this subject, we must remark, that friendship is a *mutual* relation, implying *mutual affection* and *mutual duties*. 'A man that hath friends must show himself friendly.'[1] We know, that between man and man, a certain deference to each other's wishes is necessary to the maintenance of friendship; and that any wilful or deliberate opposition, on the part of one, to the favourite purposes or pursuits of the other, must produce coldness, if not separation: in fact, that there can be no friendship on these terms. Now, if this be true, with regard to friendship between beings of equal nature, how much more true must it be, with regard to friendship between the creature and his Creator, the subject and his absolute Sovereign, the criminal and his Judge!

Are we to suppose, that the obligation to grateful requital and reciprocal affection is annulled, by the immense superiority of one party over the other? in other words, that we are less bound to return with gratitude and devotedness the love of Immanuel, than the love of a fellow-sinner? Alas! the conduct of multitudes speaks this sentiment; and the perverseness of human nature shows itself too visibly in the reception given to this wonderfully gracious Friend. Instead of regarding him with the mingled awe and affection which the union of infinite Majesty with infinite Love demands, man suffers the greatness of Jesus to produce distance without reve-

[1] Prov. xviii. 24.

renee, and his eondescension to produee familiarity without affeetion.

But we are not left to our own eonjeetures and reasonings, as to what eonstitutes a friend of Jesus, and what are the evidenees of friendship required by him. He has given us unequivoeal tests, in his own words and those of his inspired Apostles, 'Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I eommand you.'[1] 'Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.'[2]

Tried by these tests, where do we find the friends of Jesus? Alas! they are 'like the gleanings of the vintage when they have gathered the summer fruits.' For, making all due allowanee for human infirmity, for the impossibility of rendering perfect obedienee to Christ's eommands in our present state, and for our neeessary eonnexion with the world as long as we dwell in it,—making allowanee for all this, who does not see that to *aim after* universal obedience is required by the former test, and to *come out and be separate from an evil world* by the latter? And are these the eharacteristics of the multitude who yet eall themselves Christians, and faney themselves in friendship with God?

But leaving the eonsideration of these, let us look to ourselves, who lay elaim, in a peeuliar sense, to the eharaeter of friends to Jesus. And, taking the threefold definition of friendship, given in the former part of this Essay, let us inquire, how we reeeive and welcome the Lord Jesus, as our Companion, as our Counsellor, and as our Benefaetor. First, as our *Companion*, Do we, sensible in any degree of the unspeakable honour and happiness of holding fellowship with the Lord our Saviour,

[1] John xv. 14. [2] James iv. 4.

lay ourselves out to seeure as much as possible of his blessed society; avoiding, as far as relative duties permit, every thing that has a tendeney to shut him out of our hearts; lamenting the shortness of his visits to us, and humbly, yet importunately, pleading with him for longer and more permanent manifestations of his presenee; saying, with the Prophet, 'O the Hope of Israel, the Saviour thereof in time of trouble, why shouldest thou be as a stranger in the land, and as a wayfaring man that turneth aside to tarry for a night?'[1] Do we eultivate, by every appointed means, a growing and eloser eommunion with this Almighty, but most condeseending Friend? Although thankful for even a hasty interview, do we so arrange our plan of life as to seeure more unrestrained and longer eonverse with him; esteeming his company sweeter than that of our dearest earthly friends, and neeessary to the true enjoyment of that and every other earthly blessing?

Then, as our *Counsellor*, Do we ardently desire, diligently seek, and paitently wait for, his adviee; flying to him in every emergeney, as David did to Jonathan, and implieitly following his injunetions?

Or, as our *Benefactor*, Do we rightly value the inexhaustible store of benefits he is appointed to dispense to us, and fully eredit his faithful promise, to bestow upon us 'whatsoever we desire?' and do we therefore wait upon him continually with empty vessels, to be replenished out of his fulness? Alas! alas! We ean only reply to these questions,

'Were I not most vile and base
'I could not thus my Friend requite;
'And were he not the God of grace
'He'd frown and spurn me from his sight.'

[1] Jer. xiv. 8.

We confess with shame that, even compared with our requital of human friendship, defective as that is, our requital of *His* friendship who so loved us as to lay down his life for us, and who is 'over all, God blessed for ever,' is shamefully cold; that we have neither cultivated his society, sought his counsel, nor valued his benefits, in any measure as we ought; and that, had we treated any human friend as we have treated the Lord of Hosts, he would long ere now have cast us off. But *this* is the crowning excellence of Immanuel's friendship; that it is *forgiving*. It is difficult to renew with cordiality an earthly friendship, after even a slight breach: but Jesus receives his unworthy friends, with as much cordiality and affection, after their most provoking wanderings, ingratitude, and disobedience, as he did at first. Oh! then, with mingled shame, love, and joy, let us fall down at the feet of our adorable Friend; entreating him to pardon all our baseness, and to give us tokens of his continued forbearance by employing us still in his service. Let us remember his great command, That *we should love one another, even as he has loved us;* and study to obey it by loving 'all that in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, both theirs and ours.'

'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.'

ESSAY XLIV.

BROTHER.

EVERY succeeding step we take, in this delightful stage of our progress, brings us nearer to Him who is its great End and Object. Each title of God our Saviour, that offers itself to our notice, proclaims in louder and sweeter accents the blessed truth, that he is a God *nigh* unto his people,[1] and that they are a people *near* unto him.[2]

We have seen how near Immanuel comes to his people, as their Shepherd and their Physician,—we have seen him come nearer still, as their Friend.—And can the Holy One approach yet nearer to sinful worms? Yes, in assuming the title now before us, Christ avows a nearness to his people, not of office merely, or of choice, of affection, or of confidence; but a nearness of affinity, of kindred, of one common nature and family. For lo! 'He is not ashamed to call them brethren.'[3]

Among men, indeed, 'a friend' sometimes 'sticketh closer than a brother.' Children of the same parents, brought up under the same roof, are not always united even by natural affection; and, if not brethren in Christ,

[1] Deut. iv. 7. [2] Ps. cxlviii. 14. [3] Heb. ii. 11.

they must be separated throughout eternity, or united only in eternal woe; while those who are brethren by the new birth, though not by the natural one, are united by a bond which shall endure for ever. But when these two bonds are combined;—when to the tender ties of youthful companionship, early associations, affection for the same parents, and all the inexpressible charms of home-felt interests, is added the far stronger tie of an abiding and everlasting relation;—when our brother according to the flesh becomes our brother in Christ, how precious is the union! They who are privileged to enjoy it can best appreciate the comfort, support, and joy, of having Christ himself for their BROTHER: for if brotherhood with a fellow-mortal be so great a blessing; who can estimate the blessing of brotherhood with Immanuel, the Lord of glory!

In order that our minds may be more deeply impressed with a sense of the benefits flowing to believers from this relation to their Lord, let us borrow one more typical illustration from that rich magazine of Divine Truth, —the Old Testament. We there find the closest imaginable type of the Lord Jesus, in the character of Brother to his people; in one whom his brethren hated, envied, sold, and in intention slew; who was, nevertheless, delivered by God out of their murderous hands, and exalted to the highest pinnacle of earthly greatness; and this, not for his personal advantage chiefly, but for the preservation of many lands; and in particular, for the preservation of those very brethren who had conspired to take away his life. The more we examine the history of Joseph, the more we must be struck with its typical beauty. Scarcely a single circumstance is recorded of him that does not bear a close analogy to the circumstances of Christ; indeed the words of Moses respecting

the Type, and of the Evangelists respecting the Antitype, are, in many places, almost identical.

Joseph was the *beloved son* of his father, no doubt because of his piety; but he was *hated by his brethren* for that very cause, and because he brought to his father their evil report. Their hatred was increased also by the predictions of his own future greatness and dominion, which Joseph was inspired to utter.

Jesus was the Beloved Son of *his* Father; but hated by his brethren of mankind for similar reasons; because he was perfectly holy, because he testified of them that their works were evil, and because he claimed Royal and Supreme authority as the co-equal Son of God, and declared his own future exaltation as Messiah. As the brethren of Joseph indignantly asked, 'Shalt thou indeed reign over us, or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?' so the Jews, in the prophetic words of Jesus, said, 'We will not have this man to reign over us.'

Joseph was sent by his father '*to see the peace* of his brethren:'[1] but when they saw him they conspired against him to slay him, exulting in the thought, that they should thus prevent the accomplishment of his *dreams*.

Jesus was sent by *his* Father to speak peace to mankind, his brethren; but when they saw him, they said, 'This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours.' His predictions of his own future dominion they mocked, by a crown of thorns, by a purple robe, and a reed for a sceptre: and, even in his bitterest agonies, they, as it were, said, 'We shall see what will become of his *dreams*,' by tauntingly deriding his claims to the Messiahship,—'Let Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe him.'

[1] Gen. xxxvii. 14; margin.

In both cases, the brethren had misgivings that the claims of their Brother to supreme dominion *might be verified:*—in both, with mad fury, they fought against Omnipotence, to overthrow them: but in both, the fierceness of man was, by God, turned to his own praise, and to the fulfilment of his own gracious purposes and promises.

The coincidence between the type and the Antitype, during their respective seasons of humiliation, may be traced to minute particulars. The *descent* of Joseph *into the pit* shadowed forth the *burial* of the Saviour: his being *raised out of it again*, the *resurrection* of the Saviour: Joseph was sold for *twenty* pieces of silver; Jesus was sold for *thirty* pieces; the one was sold by a *Judah;* the other by a *Judas:* and the cruelty of Joseph's brethren, as it affected their aged *father* was emblematical of *their* conduct who, in the words of Jesus, had both seen and hated both him and *his Father*.

Following Joseph into the land of Egypt, we trace distinctly the same analogy, both in the treatment inflicted upon him, and in his behaviour under it. Falsely accused, tempted, punished as a criminal, '*for sins, but not his own*,' Joseph was yet meek and patient, stedfast in resisting the Tempter, eminently pure, upright, and wise; and so richly endowed by the Holy Spirit, that all men acknowledged '*the Lord was with him*, and that *the Lord made all that he did to prosper in his hand*.'[1] Even during the period of his captivity, when 'his feet were hurt with fetters, and he was laid in iron,' Joseph possessed wonderful influence over his fellow-sufferers; and their future destinies were, in a manner, placed in his hands: at least, he was empowered to pronounce the immediate

[1] Gen. xxxix. 3.

release and exaltation of one of them, and the dreadful doom of the other.

So, when the holy Jesus, our Divine Brother, was falsely accused, tempted, and persecuted, did his immaculate purity, his perfect righteousness, wisdom, and grace, shine brightly from beneath the dark cloud of slander and malignity, wherewith Satan and his agents sought to obscure them. Even his enemies were constrained to own the powerful influence of his character, which their hatred to its holiness could not altogether overcome. Numbers who were not, like Nicodemus, disciples of Jesus, were with him forced to confess, 'No man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,'—and with Pilate, 'I find in him no fault at all.' And, in an infinitely higher sense than that in which it could be said of Joseph, 'The pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hand.'—So, also, in the moment of his bitterest sufferings, and deepest abasement, did the Lord Jesus promise immediate glory to one of his fellow-sufferers, and leave the other to his merited condemnation. But let us never forget the immense distance between the type and the Antitype. Joseph spake as a mere man, inspired by the Holy Ghost, which was indeed given to him *in large measure:* Jesus spake by his own sovereign authority, and by the Spirit, which dwelt in him *without measure.*

If Joseph was a striking emblem of our Lord, in his state of *humiliation*, he was, if possible, still more so, in his state of *exaltation.* We cannot imagine a closer type of the Mediatorial dignity and authority of Christ, than that which is presented in the corresponding part of the history of Joseph. He was honoured by the king with every mark of favour, and declared to be only second to himself in authority over the kingdom, which was thence-

forth committed to his government. Pharaoh commanded all his subjects to pay to Joseph the humblest homage, and most unreserved obedience. The expressions used are very emphatic,—'Thou shalt be over my house; and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled;'—'and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt:'—'And Pharaoh took the ring off his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and they cried before him, Bow the knee.' All these honours were bestowed on Joseph as the reward of his services, during his state of humiliation. But they were also bestowed on him for the good of others; that as he had been '*A Revealer of secrets*,' interpreting Pharaoh's dreams, he might be '*A Preserver of the land*,'[1] by gathering up and dispensing the stores of corn.

Now, could there be, in human nature, a more striking representation of that God-Man who, in reward of his obedience unto death, and for the eternal good of his people, was highly exalted, and to whom God has given a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow;[2]—that, as he had been, while on earth, and indeed from all eternity, the 'Revealer of Secrets' to his people, he might also be 'The Preserver of the land,' the appointed Dispenser of the Bread of Life to all believers. 'For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;' he is invested by the Father with supreme authority over his household the Church, to bestow those inexhaustible stores of pardon, peace, holiness, and comfort, which, by his work of Redemption, he has gathered. To every famishing soul, the Father says, 'Go unto Jesus, and what he saith to you,

[1] The two interpretations of *Zaphnath Paaneah*, the name given him by Pharaoh.

[2] Philip. ii. 8–11.

do;' and whoever refuses to do this must perish, in spiritual and eternal destitution.[1]

But, in the length of this comparison, we are almost forgetting that it is in the character of *brother*, we are chiefly to regard Joseph as a type of Christ. Among those who came to buy corn in Egypt, were the sons of Israel; and now were Joseph's dreams wonderfully verified; for 'his ten brethren came, and bowed down themselves to him with their faces to the earth.' And how did the powerful governor of the land of Egypt receive these his brethren, who had sold, and nearly slain him? He received them in such a manner, as formed a correct and touching picture of the reception given by Christ to those whom he deigns to call his brethren.

From the moment when humbled sinners come to Jesus, to buy the Bread of Life, 'without money and without price,' he recognises them as his brethren, forgives all their base treatment of him, and destines for them the richest blessings. But they know not him at first, except in the character of a mighty Prince, to whom they must submit, or perish; and, for wise reasons, he does not in general make himself known to them, all at once, as their Brother; but, according to their various degrees of pride and stoutness of heart, makes them pass through a longer or shorter course of painful discipline; to humble them and prove them, to awaken a salutary sense of guilt, and bring them to more entire dependance upon himself. Even after admitting them to his house, and to his table, and giving them some foretastes of his love, he often brings their sins to remembrance, by fresh alarms and disquietudes, that they may more deeply and practically feel that he is their only Refuge and Deliverer. But when, by these means, he

[1] Gen. xli. 55.

has brought them to sincere repentance, then, O! how sweetly does he manifest himself to them as their Brother, even that Brother whom, by their sins, they sold and crucified. At first, the poor brethren of Jesus dare not give him any answer. They can scarcely credit, even from his own lips, the wonderful assurance, that a Being, so infinitely glorious, condescends to call *them* his *brethren!* Recollections of all their treacherous, contemptuous, and hateful conduct towards him, flash upon their memory; so that they, like Joseph's brethren, are 'troubled at his presence.' But, with tenderest compassion, he invites, nay, he entreats them to come near unto him; gives them sweet tokens of reconciliation; and prevents their excessive sorrow, by showing them that even their abominable sins were overruled by God to his own glory. Jesus does not treat all his brethren after the same manner. Some, like Simeon, he subjects to a more rigorous bondage; others, like Benjamin, he favours with larger portions of his gifts; some he brings into more honourable situations, like the five whom Joseph selected to present to the king. But all are welcomed as brethren; all are freely forgiven; all are supplied with every thing needful during their pilgrimage; and, finally, all are brought to dwell for ever near their exalted Brother, in the true Goshen, the land of pure light and ineffable joy.

But not through a type, only, has Immanuel revealed his brotherly relation to his people. He declared it himself, in plain and unequivocal terms, during his earthly sojourn, and confirmed it by the pen of his Apostles, since his ascension to heaven: for, hear his own gracious words, 'Whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.' And stretching forth his hand toward his disciples, he said,

'Behold my mother and my brethren;'[1] and repeatedly, both before and after his death and resurrection, he used the same endearing appellation towards his poor, erring followers.

In the 2d chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, St Paul makes this consoling statement with regard to Christ and his people, that 'he is not ashamed to call them brethren;' and gives several particulars as to the ends for which this relation was formed, and the benefits resulting from it. Taking this passage then, Heb. ii. 11–18, in connexion with those in which the term 'brethren' was used by our blessed Lord himself, let us inquire, In what sense the Lord Jesus has become the Brother of any of our race? For what ends he assumed that relation? How they are distinguished who really stand thus related to him? And, how they attained this relation?

By taking upon him our nature, the Son of God became, in a certain sense, the Brother of every child of Adam. But, that no saving effect flows from this general relation to Christ is evident, from his disclaiming any peculiar interest in those who were related to him merely by earthly consanguinity;—'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?'—and by the fact that 'neither did his brethren believe in him.'[2]

But, in a peculiar and endearing sense, he is the Brother of his chosen people, of true believers; which will best appear by considering *the ends for which he assumed that relation*, as stated in Heb. ii. These ends were, that he might, in human nature, *declare unto his people the will of God, and lead the chorus of praise, in the Church on earth and in heaven:*—'I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will

[1] Mat. xii. 49, 50. [2] Mat. xii. 48; John vii. 5.

I sing praise unto thee,'[1] *that he might, in human nature, set an example of confidence in God, under the deepest sorrow and anguish;* 'I will put my trust in him;'[2] and, above all, the Son of God took part of flesh and blood, that he might, as the Surety and Representative of his people, and the Captain of their salvation, *destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them out of his tyranny;*[3] *and that he might be unto them a merciful and faithful High Priest;* first, by making atonement for their sins, and afterwards by interceding for, and sympathising with them, in all their sufferings and temptations.[4] For the accomplishment of all these gracious ends, '*it behoved Christ to be made like unto his brethren.*'

But it is most important to consider, *how they are distinguished who really stand thus related to the Son of God.* They are not distinguished by outward pomp or station; for, by his own description of them, they may be found destitute of food and clothing, strangers, sick, and in prison.[5] But they are distinguished by *inward sanctification*, and *outward obedience;* they are those *whom he sanctifies*, those *who hear the word of God, and do it*, those *who do the will of his Father in heaven.*'[6]

Yet, lest we should be discouraged by this requisition of *perfect* obedience, and fear that our blessed relation to Christ, as our Brother, must be broken by every new relapse into sin, he has mercifully left on record the application of the title 'brethren' to his apostles, even after they had denied and forsaken him. After his resurrection, when he was soon to return to the glory which he had with the Father, before the world was, and to receive the fresh glories of the Mediatorial crown, the

[1] Heb. ii. 12. [2] Heb. ii. 13. [3] Heb. ii. 14, 15.
[4] Heb. ii. 17, 18. [5] Matt. xxv. 35–39.
[6] Heb. ii. 11; Luke viii. 21; Matt. xii. 50.

blessed Redeemer still acknowledged as 'brethren,' his poor, imperfect, and short-coming disciples; saying, 'Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.'[1] In this message of our Lord, besides the consoling inference drawn above, is contained an important truth, relative to the last question we proposed on this subject, viz.:—

How the brethren of Christ attain this blessed relation. They have it not by nature, but *by adoption* into the family of God, and *by the new birth.* There is a beautiful reciprocity between the believer's *filial* relation to *God*, and his *brotherly* relation to *Christ.* The Father predestinates him to be conformed to the image of his Son, that his Son may be the first-born among many brethren,[2]—predestinates him unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.[3] And the Son gives to as many as receive him, *power to become the Sons of God:*[4]—'Ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus;' and it is in virtue of our union to Christ, as our Brother, that *his* God and Father, as Mediator, becomes *our* God and Father also. In order, therefore, to the formation of a brotherly tie between Christ and men, it is necessary, not only that *he* assume *their* nature, but that *they* partake of *his* nature. His having become their Brother, by incarnation, will avail none who are not made his brethren, by adoption, by faith, by regeneration, and conformity to his image.

If, then, there be in our character no traces of a *family likeness* (so to speak) to our Divine Brother, let us not vainly flatter ourselves that the privileges of God's adopted children belong to us. Let us not trust in any outward signs of union with Christ, but diligently examine the

[1] John xx. 17. [2] Rom. viii. 29. [3] Eph. i. 5. [4] John i. 12.

state of our hearts towards himself and his chosen brethren. Mutual love was the test continually used by our Lord and his apostles, to evidence the sincerity of professed disciples, to themselves, and to others. 'By *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples, *if ye have love one to another*.'[1] 'We *know* that we have passed from death unto life, *because we love the brethren*.'[2]

There was a time when brotherly love abounded in the Church. The terms 'brother' and 'brethren,' so constantly used by the primitive Christians, were then no empty names, but the unfeigned expression of their mutual regard. Yet, strong and fervent as that affection was, the apostles were constantly urging their converts to abound in it more and more. Writing to the Thessalonians, St Paul says, 'Touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you; for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another;—but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.'[3] St Peter, likewise, while he acknowledges the 'unfeigned love of the brethren,' which distinguished those whom he addressed, yet adds, 'See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.'[4]

Besides these general exhortations to brotherly love, we have many particular injunctions, from our Lord and his apostles, as to the various duties implied in it. We must be willing to *forgive* our brother, should he trespass against us ever so often. We must be willing to be *reconciled* to our brother, ere we can offer any sacrifice acceptably on God's altar. We are not *to speak evil of*, nor *judge* our brother; not unnecessarily to *go to law* with him; not to *put an occasion of falling in his way;*

[1] John xiii. 35. [2] 1 John iii. 14. [3] 1 Thes. iv. 9, 10.
[4] 1 Peter i. 22.

nor *to offend his conscience*, by indulging in any thing which he thinks sinful, though we ourselves may esteem it lawful; which is, in the language of St Paul, to 'sin against Christ.' But, on the contrary, we are to be *kindly affectioned* towards our believing brethren; to *admonish and strengthen* them, and to *relieve their wants*, as far as in our power.[1]

We may well inquire, with grief, What has become of this brotherly love in our own times? How is it, that amid so much knowledge and profession, and, we trust, so much true piety also, there is, in our day, so little ardent attachment among Christians? so much, alas! of bitter envying and strife, even among those who seem to be the brethren of the Lord Jesus? Surely the admonition of Joseph was never more needful, 'See that ye fall not out by the way.' Perhaps we may be taught this lesson by some such discipline as that whereby the early Christians were taught it, namely, by persecution.

But we must now conclude, by once more 'looking unto Jesus,' our adorable Friend and Brother, and considering how safe and happy, how rich and honourable, are all those whom he owns as *brethren*. Yes, whatever be their outward estate, be it a combination of all those ills mentioned in Mat. xxv. 35–39, still they are safe and happy, rich and honourable; for their interests are so closely interwoven with those of their Divine Brother, that he esteems every kind office done or not done to them, as done or not done to himself; and their afflicted condition qualifies them, in an especial manner, for knowing him as 'a Brother born for adversity.'

If, on the other hand, our circumstances enable us to relieve the indigent brethren of Christ, how highly should

[1] Mat. xviii. 21, 22; v. 23, 24; James iv. 11; 1 Cor. vi. 6; viii. 9–13; Rom. xii. 10; xv. 14; Luke xxii. 32; James ii. 15, 16.

we value, and how gladly should we avail ourselves of so great an honour!

Finally, let us often reflect on the wonderful and blessed truth, that we have so close a relation to the Lord God Omnipotent. What can be too great to expect from a Brother who is both Human and Divine? who has, at such immense cost, purchased this relation to us, and by so wonderful an agency brought us into the family of his heavenly Father? Oh! let us walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, as 'holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling;' and continually repair to Jesus for the supply of our spiritual wants, remembering the infinite fulness that dwells in him for our use.

Let not conscious guilt deter any trembling sinner from approaching the Saviour. His heart may, like Joseph's, be yearning over us, although as yet we know him not. Or, if we do know him, if we have tasted the provisions of his house, experienced the joy of communing with him, and been treated by him as brethren, oh! let us cleave more closely to him, and seek for clearer evidences of this relation to Jesus, by increasing conformity to his image.

Thus may we look forward with joyful hope to joining the blessed family who shall meet in their Father's house, never again to part, where perfect likeness to Christ shall prove them children of God, and Christ himself shall gloriously appear, as 'the First-born among many brethren.'

ESSAY XLV.

BRIDEGROOM—HUSBAND.

Our admiration has been lately called forth by the near union, and intimate communion, to which the Lord Jesus admits his believing people, as displayed under the relations of their Friend and their Brother. But what shall we say of the still closer union, and more intimate communion, revealed under the relation that is now before us?—a relation incomparably surpassing, in nearness and tenderness, all others with which we are conversant; a relation so astonishing, so ineffably condescending, that were it not supported by the strongest Scripture evidence, it would be the height of presumption to conceive.

Such evidence, however, we undoubtedly possess; for no relation between the eternal Jehovah and his chosen people, is more clearly revealed, in both Testaments, than the one we are now to study. In the Old Testament, it is assumed by the Godhead without distinction of Persons; for he who graciously styles himself the Husband of the Church, styles himself at the

same time her 'Maker,' 'the Lord of Hosts,' 'the Holy One of Israel,' 'the God of the whole earth.'[1]

In the New Testament, this title is as clearly ascribed to, and assumed by, God the Son; for in his own words, and those of his Apostles, *he* is styled the BRIDEGROOM, and the *Church* is styled the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.[2] And not only is this gracious relation between Christ and his people clearly revealed; it is also made a channel whereby to convey to us, more richly perhaps than any other relation, the assurance of all those gracious purposes of God towards his people, and his dealings with them, which tend to their benefit and to his glory; such as, his eternal choice of them for his own, the ransom he paid for their deliverance, the grace whereby he prepares them for union to himself, the intimate and endeared communion to which he admits them, his wonderful forbearance with all their aggravated offences, his never-failing faithfulness, everlasting kindness, and Almighty protection; the identity of interests that unites Christ and his redeemed; the delight he takes in them, and they in him, even in this imperfect state; and the amazing glory which awaits the Church above, when the sacred union begun on earth shall be perfected in heaven, and she shall be invested with all the honours, riches, and delights, prepared for her as the beloved and chosen Bride of the King of kings.

Under this aspect of the Church, is shown also the important truth, that she has been 'but one'[3] in all ages, and under all dispensations; that believers have stood in the same relation to God, and he to them, in the Tabernacle of the wilderness, in the Temple at Jerusalem, and in the Church of Christ; yea, that the bliss awaiting them in 'the New Jerusalem' is but the consummation

[1] Is. liv. 5. [2] John iii. 29; Rev. xxi. 2, 9. [3] Cant. vi. 9.

of that marvellous union. This oneness of the Church may be traced in the prophetic writings, especially in Isaiah liv., xlix., and lx., and the two first chapters of Hosea. Here we find the past, present, and future conditions of the Church, all represented as events in the life of one individual. This individual is described as a Matron, who had been married in her youth, and had received unspeakable and most unmerited benefits in virtue of the marriage-covenant, but who, for her unfaithfulness, had been severely chastised, and apparently forsaken. Yet was she not utterly rejected; for, through the unparalleled forgiveness of her Lord, she was to be restored to all the privileges and endearments of the conjugal state; and not only restored, but raised to honour and happiness, far greater than she enjoyed before. For, whereas at the period when Isaiah and Hosea wrote, she was desolate from the loss of her children, a captive, and removing to and fro, she is comforted with promises of a sudden and amazing increase of offspring, which should oblige her to enlarge the place of her tent, and stretch forth the curtains of her habitation. Indeed, her moveable tent should at length be exchanged for an abiding city, a city whose foundations should be laid with sapphires, and all its borders with pleasant stones; a city which should be the abode of imperturbable peace, security, and joy. The permanency of this marriage-covenant is throughout described as depending, not upon the constancy of the Matron, but upon the inviolable faithfulness of her Lord; for he declares his covenant with her to be sure as that made with Noah, and more lasting than the mountains, because grounded upon his own righteousness, loving-kindness, mercy, and truth.[1]

[1] Is. liv.; Hosea ii. 19, 20.

Now, in these prophetic announcements, do we not read this truth, that the Church is 'but one?'—that she was espoused to God by his covenant with the seed of Abraham; was made desolate, and apparently rejected, for the idolatries and corruptions of her children the Hebrews; but, as the Mother of all believers, was to be raised to far higher honour and bliss than she had ever before known, by the introduction of the Gospel-dispensation, by the conversion of the Gentiles, the restoration of Israel, the glories of the Millennium, and, finally, by the enduring prosperity of her assembled family in Heaven.

These gracious promises of restoration to the Church began to be fulfilled when the Son of God appeared in human form as her Bridegroom. In this character he was announced by his herald the Baptist, who joyfully assumed to himself the character of the Bridegroom's friend. When John's disciples came to him to complain of the superior honour paid to Jesus, he replied, 'Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled.'[1]

Our blessed Lord himself has removed all doubt as to the application of this title, by repeatedly claiming and appropriating it. His presence with his people on earth, he termed that of the Bridegroom with the children of the bride-chamber; his departure from earth, the Bridegroom being taken away; his second coming, he termed the return of the bridegroom to complete his nuptials; the kingdom of heaven he likened to the marriage-feast

[1] John iii. 28–30.

of a king's son; and the qualification for admission into that kingdom, a wedding-garment.

The farther illustration, and practical improvement of this sacred relation, our Lord committed to his inspired Apostles. St Paul frequently alludes to it in his Epistles;[1] and in the Fifth chapter of Ephesians, he gives a particular description of the benefits thence resulting to the Church, and of her consequent duties. As the highest possible model of conjugal affection and tenderness, the Apostle directs husbands to that of Christ towards the Church: as a model for wives, in their subjection to their husbands, he holds up that of the Church to Christ. Nor does he give us merely the general declaration,—'Christ loved the Church;' but gives many proofs of the greatness and sincerity of that love. He tells us that Christ so loved the church, that 'he gave himself for her;' but this is not all: he prepares her for union with himself by sanctifying and cleansing her with his Spirit and his word, and gradually makes her meet for fellowship with him in glory, where she shall be perfectly holy, and without blemish: and during her sojourn here below, compassed as she is with dangers, infirmities, and sorrows, he nourisheth and cherisheth her, as her Saviour and Head. In short, so entire is the union, and so identical the interests, of the parties thus united, that in loving the Church, Christ loves himself, 'his own flesh and bones.' The evidence afforded by this passage is the stronger, that it does not attempt to *prove* the union between Christ and his Church, as a new or disputed point, but adduces it, for the purpose of example, as a point already established and incontrovertible.[2] Hence we are warranted to conclude, that the love of Christ to his Church excels that of the most affectionate

[1] Rom. vii. 4; 2 Cor. xi. 2, &c. [2] Ephes. v. 32.

earthly husband to the wife of his choice, as far as the attributes of Deity, joined to the sympathies of perfect Humanity, excel those of a fallible mortal: and that whatever may be looked for, of benefit or happiness, from the purest earthly union, is but a faint shadow of that enjoyed by the Church from her union with Immanuel.

It is not on earth, however, that this sacred union is completed. The Church, while here below, cannot be freed from 'spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.' But, by revelation to another apostle, our Lord has favoured us with glimpses of that state, where his Church shall be publicly proclaimed as the object of his choice, the purchase of his blood, the partner of his joys, and the object of his everlasting delight; where she shall be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, and be 'prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.'[1] Then shall the words of the prophet be fully accomplished, 'I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.'[2]

In those portions of Scripture to which our attention has been hitherto directed, the marriage-union between Christ and his Church is treated of doctrinally and prophetically. But there are two other portions of Scripture, where this union is described more experimentally; where the parties are brought before us with the vividness of living characters, and we can almost fancy that we listen to their mutual commendations, and witness their holy joy in each other. The parts to which we allude are the 45th Psalm, and 'The Song of songs, which is Solomon's.'

[1] Rev. xix. 7, 8; xxi. 2; xxii. 17. [2] Isaiah lxi. 10.

In Psalm xlv. we have a glorious view of Messiah. We see him honoured, by the Father himself, as *God*, seated on his everlasting throne.[1] We see him also honoured as Man and Mediator, anointed by God, even *his God;* and qualified for his work by every grace of the Spirit. We see this God-man, in all his terrible majesty, as the Conqueror of his enemies, and in all his amiable loveliness, as the Benefactor of his subjects. Especially, we view him as the royal *Bridegroom* of the Church; delighting in her, notwithstanding her immense inferiority, for she is his *creature*, bound to *worship* him as her Lord;[2] and investing her, as his Consort and Queen, with such dignity, splendour, and glory, as makes her an object of universal respect and admiration. The advancement of her children to the highest honours is also promised.

In the Song of Solomon, this sacred mystery is drawn out still more minutely, presenting, in the interesting form of a dialogue, the mutual affection of Christ and his people. To express the felicity of their union, images are borrowed from every tribe of earth. Flowers lend their beauty and fragrance; trees their refreshing shade and delicious fruits; perfumes their reviving odours; banquets their exhilarating cordials; gems their brilliancy, durability, and preciousness; birds their soothing and harmonious strains; spring its fresh and numberless charms. The Spouse, after exhausting all emblems of beauty whereby to describe her Beloved, sums up all in this exclamation, 'He is altogether lovely.' And no wonder that *she* should see incomparable loveliness and matchless grace in *Him* who is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the object of unutterable delight to all holy beings in heaven. But *here* is the wonder,—

[1] Ps. xlv. 6, compared with Heb. i. 8. [2] Ps. xlv. 11.

he sees in *her* similar loveliness and grace. The same expressions are used by both parties regarding each other. Does the Spouse say, 'Thy love is better than wine; because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth?' Her Beloved replies, 'How fair is thy love, my sister, my spouse! how much better is thy love than wine! and the smell of thine ointments than all spices!' Does the Bridegroom style himself 'the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the valleys?' He compares the Bride to 'a lily among thorns.' Does she affirm of him, 'He is altogether lovely?' He says to her, 'Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in thee.' Does she ardently desire his company, and long to hear his voice? He addresses to her this tender invitation, 'Let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.' Is the Bride dependant on her Beloved for every thing, leaning upon his arm? He, with ineffable condescension, speaks as though *he* were, in a certain sense, dependant on *her*, inasmuch as he could not resist her believing supplications. As, when the Lord would give to his servant Moses the strongest encouragement to *plead for* Israel, he said to him, '*Let me alone*, that I may consume them;' so, when Christ would give to his Church the strongest encouragement to prayer, he says, 'Turn away thine eyes from me, for they have overcome me.' Even the attribute of *power*, which we might have supposed applicable to Christ only, he applies to his Church, affirming of her, not only that she is 'fair as the moon,' but '*terrible* as an army with banners.'

This is indeed 'a great mystery;'—that He, in whose sight a single sin is abominable, and deserves eternal wrath, should yet view a vast aggregate of sinners, of which the Church on earth is composed, not only with-

out abhorrence, but with satisfaction and delight ;—that He to whom our goodness extendeth not, and in whose just estimation, we are, at best, unprofitable servants, should yet receive with complacency the tokens of our love, and even *desire* to hold fellowship with us. For the solution of this mystery, we must study other parts of the word of God ; but hints may be found in this book itself, which partly explain it. The Spouse confesses that, in herself, she is *black*, as the tents of Kedar, though, in the righteousness of her Lord, and the graces of his Spirit, she is *comely*, as the curtains of Solomon.[1] She confesses that the King must *draw* her, else she could not run after him ; that he had *brought* her into his chambers ; she did not come thither by her own power, or wisdom, or love. She frequently confesses herself grievously to blame : and asks those who admire her, What they can see in her ? There was nothing to be admired in her, but 'as it were, the company of *two armies ;*' the wondrous conflict carrying on within her, between the flesh and the Spirit, in which, through grace, the Spirit should be victorious.

In other parts of Scripture, however, we find clearer and fuller explanations of this mystery. We find that, through the atonement, righteousness, and intercession of the One Mediator, God beholds 'no iniquity in Jacob, nor perverseness in Israel :'[2] that they who are by faith united to Christ are made the very righteousness of God in him, have it imputed to them, and put upon them, as their own.[3] This makes them 'all fair,' even in the sight of the Holy One and the Just. But, besides this all-perfect robe, the Lord beautifies his people with personal holiness, with the varied graces of his Spirit, which, like jewels set in their heart, shine forth in their lives and con-

[1] Cant. i. 5. [2] Num. xxiii. 21. [3] Rom. iii. 21–26.

versation, and being the reflection of his own image, and the work of his hands, are pleasing and acceptable to him through Jesus Christ. Of this we have numerous proofs, both in reference to good works in general, and to particular acts of obedience. St Paul says of 'the fruits of righteousness,' generally, that they are, 'by Jesus Christ, unto the praise and glory of God:'[1] and of the charitable contribution of the Philippians, he says, it is 'an odour of a sweet smell, acceptable, well-pleasing to God.'[2] It is said in the book of Psalms, 'The Lord's delight is in them that fear him, and that put their trust in his mercy:' that 'The prayer of the upright is his delight:'—that Whoso offereth to God praise, glorifies him;—and when the disciples of Christ bear much fruit, he has assured them that thus God is glorified.

It is, therefore, possible for man, when united to Christ, and sanctified by the Spirit, to do things pleasing and acceptable to God. While humbly conscious, then, of the defilement that tarnishes our best actions, we should not forget how graciously God encourages all our attempts to glorify him; but nobly aspire to such conformity to Christ our Beloved as may render us pleasing in his eyes and in those of his Father.

But to return to Canticles.—The happiness of the Bride, although great, is far from being unalloyed or unchanging. It is liable to sudden interruptions; and the consciousness of having brought upon herself these interruptions, these seasons of estrangement from her Beloved, renders them poignantly afflictive. She is habitually assured of her union to Him whom her soul loveth: but owing to her own negligence or slothfulness, she often loses the sweet manifestations of his love. Often is she

[1] Philip. i. 11. [2] Philip. iv. 18. [3] John xv. 8.

heard to complain, 'I sought him, but I found him not: I called him, but he gave me no answer.' Then again, we hear her glad songs on having found her Beloved, and her anxious charges to all around, not to disturb or shorten his blessed visits. In short, while the happiness here shadowed forth excels all the happiness to be found in earthly unions, it is yet imperfect, and subject to temporary suspensions, perplexities, and alarms. This is further evident, from the aspirations of the Bride after brighter days and more immediate fellowship with her Beloved. The light she has, though sufficient to display his loveliness, suitableness, and preciousness, is yet but as the early dawn, compared with what she hopes for, when the day shall break and the shadows flee away. The communion she enjoys with him, though delightful, is yet limited and imperfect. He looketh through the windows, and showeth himself through the lattices: but she ardently longs for his fuller manifestations, crying out, 'Make haste my Beloved, and be thou like to a roe, or to a young hart, upon the mountains of spices.'

Hitherto we have spoken of this union, as existing between Christ, and the Church, collectively. But we know, that in whatever relation Christ stands to the body as a whole, he stands in the same to every true member of the body. In the varied experience of the Spouse, then, while we trace the varied condition of the Church, especially the Jewish Church, aspiring after the coming of Messiah, in his Gospel-light, and in the outpouring of his Spirit: we trace also the varied exercises of the believing soul, in its fellowship with Christ. The believer loves and rejoices in an unseen Saviour, and knows that in His spiritual presence alone true happiness is to be found: Christ, with adorable condescension,

manifests himself to the believer, as he does not to the world. But this blessed communion is often lost and interrupted by neglect and sin, and can only be recovered by renewed acts of faith, repentance, and diligence.

For the practical application of this subject, then, Let us inquire, whether our emotions, dispositions, and conduct, bear any resemblance to those of the Bride, as represented in Canticles? Have we such delight in the presence of God our Saviour, and such grief at his absence, as makes us restless and uneasy whenever he withdraws from us the light of his countenance? Or do we know what it is to be nearer to him at one time than at another? If not, it is to be feared we have not yet been brought into this wonderfully gracious union with the Son of God. But if we have had any experience of these things; if we have tasted and seen that the Lord is good; and known, in any measure, that it is good for us to draw nigh unto him; surely the consideration of this Title should convince us deeply of the guilt of that estrangement from him, in which we too often contentedly remain. For, have we such a high sense of the value of his manifested presence, and such a tender fear of grieving his Holy Spirit, as makes us carefully shun every trifling pursuit, and every departure from duty in small things, which, like 'the little foxes,' spoil the tender grapes of our fellowship, and mar our spiritual joys? Have we such a holy admiration of the person, offices, and character of Jesus, and of his suitableness to us, such reverent submission to his authority, such devoted surrender to him of body, soul, and spirit, such reposing confidence in his faithfulness, power, and love, as might reasonably be expected in so close and endearing a relation? Do we habitually cherish such a jealous care of

his glory and honour, as makes *his* interest *ours*, and warrants us to conclude that *our* interest is *his?*—Alas! when we compare our affections towards Him with his astonishing love and grace towards us; and especially when we consider His infinite dignity and purity, our own unworthiness and defilement, and the price, at which he has ransomed us to be his own;—what can we do but loathe ourselves in our own sight, for our iniquities and for our abominations?

But we are urged to action, as well as to emotion, by the example of the Spouse. Did she lay up for her Beloved, fruits new and old? Was she constantly employed in examining whether the vine flourished, whether the tender grape appeared, and the pomegranates budded forth? Did she invoke the north wind and the south to blow upon her garden, that the spices thereof might flow out? And, having herself tasted the joy of fellowship with the Beloved, did she recommend him to the admiration of all around? Then let us inquire, *what fruits we* are bearing, whether they are such as we can invite the Lord Jesus to inspect and partake of? whether we are praying importunately for the influences of the Spirit, without which our graces must languish and wither; and if, according to our opportunities, we are endeavouring to lead others to the knowledge of Christ?

In proportion as these things abound in us, we shall be able confidently to say, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' And although, at the review of even our purest feelings, and best actions, we are disposed to hide ourselves for shame in the clefts of the rock, yet, from thence, we may hear his gracious voice inviting us to come to him, and assuring us that, in spite of all our unworthiness and guilt, he sees in us of the travail of his

soul, and is satisfied; nay, that he rejoices over us, as the Bridegroom rejoices over the Bride.

To many readers, a great proportion of the present Essay may appear enthusiastic; drawn from fanciful interpretations of a single book of Scripture, which is confessedly difficult and mysterious. But to such readers we would say, Do you receive the Psalms as sober guides to devotion, and safe tests for self-examination? And do you find in them no vehement, and even passionate expressions of holy desire, no lively rejoicings in the light of God's countenance, no bitter lamentations during the withdrawal of that light?[1] Look at the experience of holy men of old,—at the exclamation of Job, 'Oh! that I knew where I might find him;'—at the importunity of wrestling Jacob, 'I will not let thee go, except thou bless me.' Look also at the apostles and martyrs of the New Testament, counting all things but loss that they might win Christ, and at the rebukes of Christ to the Churches of Asia, recorded in Revelation i. and ii., and you will find that all Scripture demands the warmest affections of the heart, and the whole service of the life, for Him who loved us, and gave himself for us; and that those who are cold, or even lukewarm in their attachment to him, are reckoned among his enemies.

[1] See Psalms xlii. lxiii. lxxxiv. cxliii, &c.

ESSAY XLVI.

HEAD OF THE BODY—HEAD OVER ALL THINGS TO THE CHURCH.

Oh! the wonders of that union which subsists between the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church! Oh! the wisdom and goodness of God, in unfolding to us this sacred mystery, in similes so striking and familiar, so admirably suited to our present limited capacities and earthly imaginations!

We have been occupied, of late, in tracing the reciprocal love of Christ and his people, under the endearing relations of friendship and of kindred; and we seemed to have exhausted our store of images, and to have traced the union under its closest possible form, while viewing Christ as the Husband of his Church. But, in the title now before us, the same union is presented under a closer form still; not only as that indissoluble bond whereby two persons become, in a figurative sense, 'no more twain but one flesh;' but as that union whereby the head and the members literally form but one body. The appeal here made is not to natural affection, but to that still stronger and more universal principle of our nature, self-preservation. This emblem derives its force, not from our connexion with other human beings, however near and dear, but from the connexion of parts in

that fearful and wonderful frame which every one of us carries about with him.

The unity of Christ with his people is fully declared by St Paul under this emblem. In one place, he says, 'As we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office; so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.'[1] In another place, he says, 'We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.'[2] And in one chapter especially, the 12th of 1st Corinthians, the Apostle enlarges upon this emblem, and draws from it a rich store of practical instruction. He represents Christ, as not existing separately from his people, but entirely one with them. 'For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, *are one body: so also is Christ.*'[3] This statement perfectly accords with the petition of the Redeemer, in behalf of his true disciples in every age, 'That they all may be *One;* as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be *One in us.*'[4]

What amazing condescension is here displayed! He who, in essential Deity, is *One with the Father*, in glory and majesty, becomes *One with Man*, in nature, in covenant, and in identity of interests; so as to deem the Church a part of himself! He, by whom and for whom all things were created, who is before all things, and by whom all things consist, who is infinitely exalted in divine sovereignty, above all orders of created beings, has yet identified his own glory, as Mediator, with the salvation of his elect. For although, as God, he needs not their homage or service; yet, as Mediator, his glory would be incomplete, if one of his members should perish;

[1] Rom. xii. 4, 5.
[2] Eph. v. 30.
[3] 1 Cor. xii. 12.
[4] John xvii. 21.

so that, with reverence, we may apply to Christ and his people this saying of St Paul, 'The Head cannot say to the feet, I have no need of you.'

'The Church of Christ, then, is his Body, firmly 'united to him and among themselves, by the Spirit, 'faith, love, sacraments, word, and ministry; which, 'like the veins and arteries in the body, serve to join 'them with Christ and among themselves, and also to 'convey influence and nourishment from the head to 'every member of this mystical body.'[1] As the head is the seat of reflection, motion, and guidance, to the body; so Christ is the source of wisdom, activity, and direction, to the Church; and as, severed from the head, the best proportioned body instantly becomes lifeless, powerless, and a prey to corruption, so is every soul that is severed from Christ: for 'without (or *severed from*) me,' says the Saviour, 'ye can do nothing.'[2]

But, 2dly, we are now to apply this Title to Christ in another sense; viz. that of a *Ruler* or *Governor*. Christ is the *Head of the Church*, as he *rules and governs her*. The titles Head of the Body, and Head of the Church, are one; because Christ is 'the Head of the body, the Church.'[3] For the sake of distinctness, however, we shall take them separately; using the former, '*Head of the Body*,' to denote the *unity* and *tender sympathy* of Christ *with his people;* and the latter, '*Head of the Church*,' to express his *sovereign rule and authority over his people*. These two senses of the title, far from confusing, serve to elucidate and strengthen each other: indeed, it is the combination of the two that renders this title so precious to the Church; the *sympathy* implied in the former sense being a pledge that the *authority* implied in the latter will be exercised in

[1] Cruden. [2] John xv. 5; margin. [3] Col. i. 18.

the kindest possible manner; the *power* implied by the latter being a pledge that the *sympathy* implied by the former will be available in every emergency. These two acceptations of the title are finely illustrated by St Paul, in the 4th chapter of Ephesians. Here we view the Church, as *one Body*, animated by *one Spirit*, having 'one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.' We see the Head of this Body, after his visible sojourn on earth, ascending up far above all heavens, leaving his poor members, apparently scattered and defenceless. But wherefore has their Head left them, and gone up on high? It is, that he may carry on in heaven the great work which he began on earth, that of gathering and uniting his members to himself and to each other; it is, that he may send down upon them the blessed gifts of a Christian ministry, and Christian graces. And for what end does he send these gifts? It is 'for the edifying of the body of Christ;' that his members 'may grow up into him in all things,' and be firmly joined to him, and to each other, as the different parts of the body are by joints and bands knit together; and that, by the proportionable increase of every part, the body itself may increase, until it come unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.[1] Thus we see how Christ employs his *sovereign rule over his people* as *Head of the Church*, to promote his *unity* with them as *Head of the Body*: how he dispenses to certain of his members, offices and gifts, whereby to cement the whole in one Body; that, by mutual union with him, their Head, they may have nourishment ministered, and increase with the increase of God.[2]

But, 3dly, the term Head is used in Scripture in a

[1] Eph. iv. 4–16. [2] Col. ii. 19.

still higher sense, even to express the *absolute and universal dominion of Jehovah.* David, in a devout ascription of glory to God, says, 'Thine is the kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all.'[1] That the title Head, taken in this, its highest sense, belongs to the Son, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost, none can doubt who acknowledge the doctrine of the Trinity. But it belongs to the Son in a peculiar manner; for not only is he '*Head above all,*' by essential Deity: he is also '*Head above all to the Church,*' as the appointed Mediator. This is the great matter of rejoicing to the Church, that he who is so closely *united* to her as to style her *his Body*, and who is her *internal Ruler* and *Governor*, not only possesses *infinite and uncontrolled authority*, in heaven, in earth, and in hell; but *holds this authority for the express purpose of promoting her welfare, and securing her interests.* No doctrine is more clearly stated in the New Testament than this,—that, in reward of his obedience unto death, and in order to perfect the great designs of his death, the glory of God and the salvation of the elect, our Lord Jesus Christ was, upon his ascension, exalted, as Man and Mediator, to the highest favour with God his Father, and invested by him with universal dominion; with the administration of Nature, of Providence, and of Grace; with power to subdue all enemies under his feet, and to gather together in One all the children of God.

Let no one think that we can derogate from the glory of God the Father, in thus ascribing to the Son all honour and dominion. We only acquiesce in the Father's will, by doing so; 'for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell,'[2] 'that in all things he

[1] 1 Chron. xxix. 11. [2] Col. i. 18, 19.

might have the *pre-eminence*,' 'that he might *gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him.'[1]

It remained for the Gospel-dispensation fully to declare this great office of Christ; but intimations of it were not wanting under the Mosaic dispensation. We may trace, though dimly, in the ancient Church, all the three points stated above; the *unity* of Christ with his people, his *government* of them, and his *universal sway for their benefit*. His *unity* with them was revealed in the terms of the first promise, 'It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel;' for the people of Christ, as well as himself, personally, were included in that *Seed* of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head; as they were also in the covenant made with Abraham and his Seed.[2] That the *government* of the Church was, from the beginning, vested in the Son, in anticipation of his Mediatorial office, has been frequently proved in the course of this work; and we need not here repeat the evidences which prove him to have been 'The Ruler in Israel from everlasting,' as well as Israel's 'Redeemer from everlasting.'[3] The same evidences warrant us to conclude, that as he regulated the *internal* policy of his Church, so he *overruled all external affairs and events to her good;* that it was He, who of old 'suffered no man to do his people wrong, yea, who reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.'[4] The sublime declaration, 'JESUS CHRIST, THE SAME YESTERDAY, AND TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER,'[5] is sufficient proof that every office the Son of God now sustains, he has sustained

[1] Eph. i. 10. [2] Gen. xvii. 7, 8; Gal. iii. 16–29.
[3] See Essay on the '*Angel-Jehovah*.' [4] Ps. cv. 14, 15.
[5] Heb. xiii. 8.

from the beginning, though not with equal clearness of manifestation.

During his lowly sojourn with his members, on earth, our Lord uttered many declarations of his office as Head of the Church, in all the senses noticed above; viz. by *unity with* her, by *authority over* her, and by *universal dominion for her benefit.*

Of his *unity* with his people, the blessed Jesus gave the most touching assurances; such as the following:—'He that receiveth you receiveth me;'—'he that despiseth you despiseth me:'—'inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me;—inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.'[1]

Of his *authority* over the Church, as her Head, Jesus gave many proofs, both by word and deed. He appointed and sent forth apostles and preachers, endowing them with spiritual and miraculous gifts: he cleansed the Temple by his own authority; he instituted new rites of worship, to supersede the old; and, with Divine authority, he pronounced eternal blessedness to be the portion of all who heard and obeyed him; and eternal misery to be the doom of all who rejected him. On one occasion, in particular, the despised Jesus of Nazareth stood forth as Head of the Church, at the time then present, from the beginning of time, and to the end. The occasion to which we allude, was that when he rebuked the Scribes and Pharisees, the pretended office-bearers of the Church, for their hypocrisy,—thereby asserting a *present* rule over her; and at the same time claimed, as his own, all the Divine efforts for Israel's reformation in ages *past*, and all the new efforts to be made in ages *to come.* For he speaks in his own

[1] Matt. x. 40; Luke x. 16; Matt. xxv. 40, 45.

name, when exclaiming, 'O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' And here also, 'Behold I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill,'[1] &c.

It did not consist with his state of humiliation, that Jesus should openly avow himself 'Head over all things.' Yet he gave to his disciples clear and repeated assurances of this, his glorious character; and to the multitude it was displayed, though they were too blind to discern it, in his miraculous sway over the elements, over the bodies and souls of men, and over evil spirits.

The Baptist bore witness to Christ, in this character, saying, 'The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.' The Son himself declared, 'All things are delivered unto me of my Father.'[2] But it was not till after his sacrifice had been offered and accepted, till his victory over death and hell had been achieved, and he was about to ascend up where he was before, that Jesus entered upon the full exercise of his office, as 'Head over all things to the Church.' This he announced to his apostles, when parting from them, saying, 'All power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth;' and forthwith gave them the authoritative commission, 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,'—and the encouraging promise, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.'[3]

The particulars related by St John, in the close of his Gospel, mark the risen Saviour, as 'Head of the body, the Church,' both by *tender sympathy*, and by *supreme authority*;[4] the former, in his injunction to Peter, to

[1] Matt. xxiii.
[2] John iii. 35; Luke x. 22.
[3] Matt. xxviii. 19, 20.
[4] John xxi. 15–23.

feed his lambs, the weak and helpless members of his body; the latter, in his sovereign decisions regarding the Apostles themselves, viz. that Peter should suffer for him, and by 'what death;' and that John should tarry, if he willed, till he came.

We have now drawn, from the Gospels and Epistles, many proofs of the justness of this title, as applied to our Lord Jesus Christ. But there are two books of the New Testament, which, although they do not contain one mention of the title in words, may yet be considered, throughout, as illustrative of its meaning. These books are the Acts, and the Revelation. The book of Acts, containing the history of the primitive Church, is truly a delineation of the Body of Christ, and of Him as her Head. Every thing is done in *His* name, and by *His* authority. *He* sheds forth the Holy Ghost upon his ministers; in *His* name they baptise, they preach, they heal the sick, they cast out devils. And while due honour is rendered to the other Persons of the blessed Trinity, it is the honour rendered to the name of *Jesus* which is the grand characteristic of the new Church. To be witnesses for *Him*, witnesses of *His resurrection*, is the principal office of the ministers of God; to believe in *Him*, the distinguishing mark of the people of God, who thenceforth are called after *His* name, Christians. While the apostles laboured to convince their countrymen, that this religion, though new in the clearness of its discoveries, was not new in substance; for that Jesus Christ was 'before preached' unto them, 'by Moses and all God's holy prophets since the world began:' yet teaching and preaching *in the name of Jesus* was the offence which drew down upon them all the rage of the Jewish authorities. Jesus Christ, therefore, was consi-

dered *Head of the Church*, Founder of the new religion, both by its enemies and by its friends.

There is an instance of the immediate agency of Christ, recorded in Acts, which strikingly illustrates the two-fold meaning of this title, Head of the Body, and Head of the Church : we mean the conversion of St Paul, with its attendant circumstances. Here we see, in perfect harmony, the *tender sympathy* of Christ with individual members, and his *sovereign authority* over the whole body. In the touching expostulation, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' we have the surest pledge of the *sympathy* of Christ, that whoso toucheth his people, toucheth the apple of his eye : while, in the authoritative command laid upon the subdued persecutor, and afterwards in the commission given to Ananias, we as clearly discern the *supremacy* of Christ, and see how he employs, at his pleasure, certain members of the body, to benefit the other members, and magnify his own glory, as their Head ; for, to bear *His* name was the office to which he appointed this 'chosen vessel;' the great things he must suffer were for *His name's sake.*

In the Book of Revelation, we trace this office of Christ, through a later period, but one distinguished still by his immediate agency. The three first chapters present him, in the clearest possible light, as 'Head of the body, the Church;' the remainder of the book exhibits him with equal clearness, as 'Head over all things to the Church.'

No emblem can be imagined more expressive of the vigilant superintendence of Christ over the members of his body, than the one presented in the early part of this book ; viz. his holding the seven stars in his right hand, and walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks. Nor are we left to discover, by our own conjec-

tures, the meaning of these symbolical terms; we are expressly told, 'the seven stars are the seven angels (or ministers) of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks are the seven churches.'

The addresses to each separate church, by name, awfully declare the truth of this emblematical description; showing how minutely the Lord Christ inspects, not only the works, but the secret emotions, of his professed disciples; whether as individuals or communities; how he marks every secret declension in love, and other graces, even where no outward signs betray it; how strict he is to point out the 'few things' that offend him, even where the general conduct is good; how he compares the present with the former state of each church, sees whether it be increasing in fruitfulness, or if the things that remain be ready to die; distinguishes the different classes that compose each church; notices with approbation the few that are worthy, among the many who have a name to live, but are dead; and indignantly rebukes the unwatchful, the lukewarm, and the self-righteous.

Nor does the Head of the Church suffer us to suppose that his authority is exercised only in the way of admonition and rebuke. With Divine authority, he threatens the most fearful judgments on those who should continue impenitent, especially the spiritual judgment of deprivation of Gospel light,—the removal of their candlestick. And of all his dealings with the churches, he declares *this* to be the object,—'And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'[1]

But, along with these awful tokens of the vigilance

[1] Rev. ii. 23.

and judicial authority of Christ, as Head of the Church, we see mingled the sweetest tokens of his tender sympathy, as Head of the Body. How considerately does he weigh the peculiar temptations of each church, with the measure of strength granted to each; marking 'where the dwelling' of one is, the 'tribulation and poverty' of another; the 'little strength' which yet had 'kept his word, and not denied his name,' in a third. How condescendingly does he take notice of any graces that exist, amidst much infirmity and unworthiness; commending the labour and patience, the charity and service; the faith, patience, and growing fruitfulness of his people; using every means to nourish and cherish them, giving them to eat of the hidden manna, and of the fruit of the tree of life, inviting them to close communion with him here, and promising them a share of his throne hereafter.

We remarked that, as in the early chapters of the book of Revelation, the Lord Christ manifestly appears Head of the Body; so, in the remainder of the book, he as manifestly appears Head over all things to the Church. Much obscurity hangs over the deep things here revealed; but, amidst this obscurity, one bright truth shines with equal and steady light, namely, *That all events in this world, past, present, or future, and all operations in the unseen world, are ordained and permitted by 'Him who liveth, and was dead, and is alive for evermore,' to accomplish his grand scheme, the salvation of his elect.* Is the scene of the vision laid in heaven? We behold angels, and authorities, and powers, made subject unto the Son, and finding their highest joy in extolling him as the Lamb, or the glorified Head of the Church. Is the scene laid on earth? We see angels, the ministers of God's pleasure, pouring out the vials of his wrath upon the ene-

mies of his church. We see wars, famines, pestilences, and all other human miseries, not the fruit of second causes, as we are so prone to view them; but appointed, as to their time, place, and measure, by Him who sitteth upon the throne; all issuing from that mysterious book, the seals of which were opened by the Lamb. We see a broad and careful distinction made between God's dealings with the world and with the church. His people must not be involved in any of those terrible judgments which he sends upon the ungodly; but the hand of the destroying angels must be stayed, till every one of them be 'sealed in their foreheads.'

Not that the church is exempt from judgments; far otherwise. Her children are oppressed, persecuted, and slain, for the testimony which they hold, and their Head seems at times to withdraw from the conflict, and leave the issue doubtful; so that they are heard to complain, 'How long, Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?' Yet, amid all this apparent triumph of his enemies, and apparent danger of his church, the Lord God Omnipotent is directing every movement of the mighty army, to the completion of his victory over hell and death. The foe cannot inflict a single wound on one of his people, nor on his church, which he has not decreed to be inflicted. His witnesses must indeed prophesy in sackcloth; his holy city must be trodden under foot; his people must suffer tribulation; his church must flee into the wilderness. But how greatly does it alleviate all these troubles, when we see them, not caused by men or devils, who are but instruments, but ordained by Him who loveth the Church, and gave himself for her. He has decreed the precise duration of each judgment; and although he afflicts his own people, he will yet severely

punish their persecutors. For so great is the value he sets upon his witnesses, that, ‘ if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies ; and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed. These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not,—power over waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.’[1] The glorious issue of all these conflicts is unalterably fixed in the counsels of Heaven.—‘ The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.’ All the kings who receive power with the beast, and give their power and strength unto the beast, shall be overcome by the Lamb ; ‘ for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings.’—‘Babylon the great,—drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus,’—‘shall be utterly burned with fire,’—‘be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.’[2] Satan, the accuser of the brethren, shall be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone ; and the celestial courts shall resound with the voice of exultation over the enemies of the Lord, and of praise for his wonderful love to his redeemed, saying, ‘ Alleluia : for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him ; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.’ Does it not, then, most gloriously appear in this book, that the Lord Jesus Christ is not only Head of the Church, but Head over all things to the Church ?

Since the volume of inspiration was closed, the Lord Jesus has not, by immediate revelation, or miraculous interposition, shown himself Head over all things to the

[1] Rev. xi. 5, 6. [2] Rev. xi. 15 ; xvii. 12–14, 6 ; xviii. 8, 21.

Church. But can we, therefore, doubt his continued exercise of this office? Do we not rather see, in every page of the Church's history, in all succeeding ages, undeniable proofs of an Almighty Head, guiding and directing the Body, maintaining within the Church, the pure word of life, the ordinances of the sanctuary, and a succession of faithful ministers; and never leaving himself without witnesses, even during the darkest times? And do we not also see, in the history of the Church, proofs of Christ's universal sway for her good? Do we not see how the events of Providence have been overruled to this great end; how the ambition, the caprice, the sinful passions, of kings, the selfish policy of cabinets, the wars and alliances of nations, and numberless links in the chain of events, have been all overruled to this one great object?—how, in critical junctures, such, for instance, as the establishment of the Reformation in Europe, and its introduction into Scotland and other countries, a succession of instruments was raised up, one appearing, just as another disappeared, evidently proving, to the mind of the Christian reader, that He who is Head of the Church, is also Head over all things to the Church?

The same blessed truth may be discerned in the history, and is felt in the experience, of every true member of Christ's body; viz. that he to whom they are united by so close and tender a tie, rules in them, and rules for them, causing 'all things to work together for their good.'

What cause, then, can the Church have to despond, whatever be the dangers that threaten her? Although 'the heathen rage, and the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together;'—'He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have

them in derision.' The gates of hell shall never prevail against Zion; for she is united in the closest and most inseparable bond to Him who ruleth Omnipotent, over heaven, earth, and hell.

While, however, we cannot be too confident of the stability of the Church invisible, and of every one of her members, we may yet reasonably and believingly tremble for the stability of certain portions of the Church visible. We have strong grounds for apprehension, lest the candlestick should be removed, where the light is rejected or misimproved. The only strength of a church is its union to Christ the Head. But, alas! there are *churches* so calling themselves, who do not even outwardly 'hold the Head;' and there are many more, whose 'angels' are themselves but feebly united to Christ the Head, and therefore cannot minister much nourishment to their hearers. Even where the doctrines of the Cross are faithfully declared, and there is much outward semblance of union to Christ, how small is the proportion of living members! how few who are not chargeable with one or more of the faults imputed to the members of 'the seven churches!' And, if these things be so in this highly favoured land, which has so long enjoyed pure Gospel light, how can she expect to escape the just chastisement of the Head of the Church? Oh! that, roused by the loud calls of Providence, and by the still small voice of the Spirit, we might turn, and repent, and do the first works, ere our candlestick be removed out of its place! Let us often, by faith, realize the solemn truth, that our illustrious Head is walking amongst us, examining, with his eyes of fire, our professed union with himself, trying our works, and the motives whence they flow, weighing our faith, love, and patience, and infallibly discerning which of us have but 'a name to live,' while we are

'dead.' Especially, let us remember how closely he marks what improvement we are making of his precious gifts, his ordinances, his word, and ministers.

Oh! let us not rest any confidence on being members of the Church visible, which, if misimproved, will only add to our condemnation; but earnestly inquire whether we are members of the Church invisible, which 'has communion with Christ in grace here, and in glory hereafter.'[1]

But we must also remember, that if members of Christ, we are also 'members one of another.' We have in this emblem the strongest possible injunction to mutual sympathy and care one of another, to quiet and contented occupation of our respective places, and to faithful and diligent use of our talents; not each for his own advantage or his own glory, but each for the good of the whole Body, and the glory of its Divine Head.

The more these evidences abound, whether in churches, or in individual members, the more confidently may they adopt the words of the Apostle, 'Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

[1] Shorter Catechism.

ESSAY XLVII.

THE RESURRECTION—HE THAT ASCENDED UP ON HIGH—FORERUNNER.

We have been engaged of late in studying the union that subsists between the Lord Jesus Christ and his people, under many delightful emblems. We are now to study the most glorious consequence of that union,—viz. that the people of Christ are one with him in his Resurrection and Ascension; for it was as a public Person, or Covenant-Head, as 'the Second Adam,' as 'the Head of the body, the Church,' that he rose from the dead, and ascended up far above all heavens.

These two events, the Resurrection and Ascension of our Lord, are so closely connected, the one being the introduction to the other, that we shall view them together. And having already considered Christ as the Author of resurrection to the soul,[1] it shall be the object of the present Essay to consider him as the Author of resurrection to the body, and of glorification to both body and soul in heaven.

This subject naturally divides itself into three branches:—

[1] See 'Quickening Spirit.'

1st, The importance of the fact of Christ's resurrection.

2d, The evidences of that fact.

3d, The blessed results of it.

Or, we may state these three points in the words of St Paul :—

1st, 'If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.'[1]

2d, 'But now is Christ risen from the dead.'[2]

3d, 'If we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'[3]

First, Let us consider *the importance of the fact of Christ's Resurrection*. Although all the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel are so linked together, that where one is wanting, the chain cannot stand, and therefore are all, in one sense, equally important, yet 'the doctrine of the 'Resurrection of Christ possesses superior importance, 'inasmuch as it is the demonstration of all the rest. Hence 'St Paul says, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preach-'ing vain, and your faith is also vain." "If Christ be 'not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins." 'The Apostles, being sent to convert the world, were to 'lay this down as the foundation of their preaching, '"that *Jesus Christ was raised from the dead*,"[4] that all 'might yield faith and obedience to him. The resur-'rection of Christ confirms the faith of Christians in his 'person, as he is thereby "*declared to be the Son of God* '*with power*."[5] He was the Son of God from eternity 'as the *Word*, and from the first moment of his incar-'nation as God-man; yet the honour of this relation 'was much eclipsed in his poor life and ignominious 'death; but in his resurrection, God did publicly own

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 17. [2] 1 Cor. xv. 20. [3] 1 Thes. iv. 14.
[4] Acts i. 21, 22. [5] Rom. i. 4.

'him in the face of the world; therefore he is represented testifying from heaven, "*Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.*"[1] His resurrection was likewise a most pregnant proof of the all-sufficiency of his satisfaction. The curse of the law accompanied his death, and seemed, like an infinite weight, to lie on his grave; but in rising again, the value and virtue of his sufferings was fully declared: "*He was delivered for our sins, and was raised again for our justification.*" Having, as our Surety, paid our debt, and given full satisfaction to divine justice, he was released from the grave, and the discharge was most solemnly published to the world. On this doctrine of his resurrection is also built our faith in his promises to give life and glory to his servants. For how could we believe him to be the Author of Life, who remained under the power of death? If he had been confined to the grave, all our hopes had been buried with him. But his resurrection is the cause, pattern, and argument of ours; and Christ may be said not only to have raised his body from the grave, but also his Church with him.'[2]

Secondly, The importance of this fact, then, being so vast, how thankful should we be for the clear and strong *evidences we possess of its truth!* We have the evidence of ancient prophecy, the distinct and oft repeated predictions of our Lord himself before his death, and the evidence of friends and enemies, from the age in which the event happened to the present day.

In adducing the evidence of *ancient prophecy*, it must be confessed, that the resurrection of Messiah was not so clearly foretold by the Prophets, as his birth, his incarnate life, and his death. It was chiefly to be gathered from what they testified of '*the sufferings of Christ, and*

[1] Acts xiii. 33. [2] Cruden.

the glory that should follow.'[1] Hence we find, that although the doctrine of a *general resurrection* was believed by the Jews at the time of our Lord's coming, as is evident from the Sadducees being distinguished for denying it,—from the assured confidence of Martha in her brother's resurrection at the last day,—and from its being a subject of discussion among the people,—yet the *resurrection of Messiah* was a doctrine unknown to them. Even the companions of Jesus, who had so often heard from his own lips, that *on the third day he should rise again*, were so far from recognising in this declaration, a token of his Messiahship, that their hopes were entirely blasted by his death; and they distrusted the strongest evidences of his resurrection, until he himself *opened to them the Scriptures*, and showed them that, *according to the Prophets, Christ ought to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.*[2]

The cause of this ignorance in the Jews is obvious. They looked for no other deliverance from the Messiah, but what could be effected during the natural life of a human conqueror; they knew not the nature of his person as God-man, the nature of his conquests as requiring sufferings and death, nor the nature of his kingdom as spiritual and heavenly. They therefore misunderstood all the intimations of his *glorious reign succeeding his death and burial*, such as in Isaiah liii. and Psalm xxii. And although they had the sign of the prophet Jonas;[3] the prediction of the prophet Hosea, '*After two days will he revive us: in the third day he* '*will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight;*'[4] and the lively typical anticipation of David in the 16th Psalm, 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither

[1] 1 Pet. i. 11.
[2] Luke xxiv. 26–46.
[3] Mat. xii. 39, 40.
[4] Hosea vi. 2.

wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption;' a prediction which, as Peter proved, could apply only to the resurrection of Messiah;[1] they were, nevertheless, too much blinded by carnal prejudices to comprehend and apply them.

We, however, who enjoy the mutually-reflected light of both Testaments, may trace in ancient Scripture, besides the evidences above given, many proofs '*that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead;*'[2] that his being the first that should rise from the dead, was one of the things which '*the Prophets and Moses did say should come.*' We may trace it in the words of Isaiah, 'Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise.'[3] We may trace it in all those Psalms and other prophetic writings which describe the glorious kingdom of Messiah *succeeding* his death and burial; and if we do not find, in the *words* of Moses, any express prediction of the resurrection of Christ, we find in the *rites* established by Moses, and in the *events* recorded by him, striking emblems of that great event. For example, we find an emblem in the living bird, after having been dipped in his fellow's blood, and used for cleansing the leprous man, or the leprous house, being then let go loose into the open field; we find another in the scape-goat, released, after bearing away the iniquities of all Israel; and another, still more striking, in the figurative resurrection of Isaac; for St Paul says, Abraham received him from the dead in a figure.[4]

If, however, there was obscurity in the intimations of this event, given by ancient prophets, there was none *in those given by Christ himself.* In the most distinct manner, he repeatedly declared, that after his death he

[1] Acts ii. 25–34. [2] Acts xvii. 3. [3] Is. xxvi. 19.
[4] Heb. xi. 19.

should rise again on the third day, and ascend up where he was before. The period which he fixed for his Resurrection, was carefully recorded *by his enemies;* for it was their chief accusation against him, that he asserted his power to *re-build the temple in three days.*[1] By the wonderful interposition of Providence, they were moved to take such precautions against the fulfilment of his assertion, as serve, in the strongest manner, to prove its real accomplishment. They took every means to 'make the sepulchre sure, until the third day,' sealing the stone and setting a watch, because 'that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.' 'But vain the stone, the seal, the watch.' Yea, rather, Blessed the stone, the seal, the watch; for they prove, even more strongly than the blood-sealed testimony of *friends*, the truth of this magnificent fact, 'NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD.' His enemies, by taking these precautions, reduced themselves to the necessity of sitting down under the foulest aspersions of falsehood, cruelty, and murder, rather than make any farther inquiry into the transaction, by bringing to trial, either the apostles whom they charged with so bold a fraud, or the soldiers whom they bribed to accuse themselves of a crime punishable with death by the Roman law.

But we possess, in testimony of this great event, not merely the forced, negative evidence of enemies, but the *cordial, positive, and disinterested evidence of many friends.* The eleven Apostles, to whom a twelfth was soon added, were men of irreproachable integrity: they could not be mistaken in the fact, that they saw and conversed with Jesus after he rose from the dead; and that this was not the effect of a heated imagination, prepossessed with anticipations of his reappearance, is evident from the ex-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 61.

treme slowness which they showed to believe it. 'One 'of the ancients well says, Their doubting is the con- 'firmation of our faith; and the more difficulty they 'showed in believing Christ's resurrection, the greater 'reason have we to believe it. For the testimony of 'them that believed not themselves till after unquestion- 'able conviction is the more credible on that account.'[1] Now, since these men spent the whole of their remaining lives in asserting that Christ was risen,—since they persisted in this assertion in the face of persecution and death, ready to seal it with their blood, as indeed most of them did, bequeathing their testimony in writing to posterity,—how can any reasonable doubt be entertained of their truth? Their blessed Master condescended to give them the strongest sensible evidences of his Resurrection: he ate and drank with them; he walked, sat at meat with, and conversed with them; he invited them minutely to examine his body, that they might be convinced he had flesh and bones; and that it was the same body which had been pierced with the nails and the spear. Yet, along with these evidences of his real humanity, and resurrection in the body, there were tokens of a *spiritual* body, in the miraculous way in which he appeared to his disciples and then vanished out of their sight; and along with his former sympathy and tenderness, there was mingled more of dignity and authority, as he was about to ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God.

His ASCENSION was likewise visibly manifested to his Apostles. 'While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly towards heaven, as he went up,' they

[1] Whitby in Scott; Mark xvi. 12, 13.

saw and heard angels, who spake of his second coming, 'in like manner,' that is, in the body.

Nor does the fact of our Lord's Resurrection rest upon the testimony of his Apostles alone. The number of witnesses, according to St Paul, was above five hundred, the greater part of whom were alive, when St Paul appealed to them twenty-six years after the event;[1] yet not one of these witnesses ever retracted his testimony. And, because all human testimony was too feeble to confirm so stupendous a truth, God himself was pleased to bear witness of it, by bestowing on those who preached it the most extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, to which they confidently appealed, as evidences of the truth of their doctrine.[2] And the continued fulfilment of the prophecies left on record by these men, during a period of 1800 years, is a standing and increasing confirmation of their grand doctrine, THAT JESUS CHRIST IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD.[3]

With unhesitating confidence, then, may we exclaim, with the Apostle, 'Now is Christ risen from the dead;' and proceed to examine the grounds of our *third proposition:* '*If Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him:*' or, in other words of the same Apostle, 'Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.'

This is indeed the very essence and marrow of our subject. For Jesus is The Resurrection and the Life,[4] not chiefly because he raised his own body from the grave, and ascended in that body to heaven; but because, by his Resurrection and Ascension, he became the *Author, Pattern, and Forerunner, of his people's resurrection and*

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 6. [2] Acts ii. 32, 33; v. 30–32.

[3] This summary of evidences is partly drawn from Scott's Commentary. [4] John xi. 25.

eternal glorification. As it was in the character of our Surety and Representative, that he died, it was in that same character that he rose again, and took possession of the heavenly mansions. As it was not possible that Christ, 'the Head of the body,' should be holden of the pains of death,[1] neither is it possible that any of his members should be holden of them. In the lively realization of this truth, St Paul overlooks all intervening time and space, and speaks of himself and his fellow Christians as already risen together with Christ, and made to sit together with him in heavenly places.[2]

In one sense, indeed, Christ is the Resurrection to all men: for all will be raised by his power; 'the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth.'[3] But, in a peculiar and blessed sense, he is The Resurrection, to 'them that are his:' for *they* only have cause to rejoice in the prospect of a resurrection. Of the resurrection of the wicked, little is said in Scripture, except with regard to its tremendous consequences. These must come before us, in the ensuing Essay. At present, we may dwell with unmingled delight, on the Resurrection of believers, which is alone treated of, in that sublime chapter whence our clearest notions of it are drawn—the 15th of 1 Corinthians.

That the resurrection of believers to glory is the infallible consequence of the resurrection of Christ to glory, is here set forth under the striking emblem of the harvest succeeding the First-fruits:—'Christ the First-fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.'[4] It is here shown to be as certain, as their inheritance of this mortal existence from their first parent; 'for as in Adam

[1] Acts ii. 24.
[2] Ephes. ii. 6, 7.
[3] John v. 28.
[4] 1 Cor. xv. 23.

all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.'[1] And the victory which Christ shall thus obtain for his people, over the last enemy, Death, is shown to be necessary to the completion of his Mediatorial glory; according to the ancient predictions, that 'He must reign, till he hath put *all enemies* under his feet;' and that '*Death* is swallowed up in victory.'[2] The victory of the Redeemer is to be sung, not only over *spiritual* death, by the regeneration and immortal bliss of the *soul;* but also over *temporal* death, by the resurrection of the *body:* 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?—Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'[3]

The same blessed truth, the resurrection of believers to glory, is declared in many other parts of the Apostolic writings. But why should we appeal to them, when we can appeal to the very words and acts of our Lord himself? It was in reference to his office of raising his people's *bodies*, that he said to Martha, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'—It was to encourage his beloved John with the assurance of his authority over the *grave*, that he said, 'I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.'[4] During his earthly sojourn, Jesus announced most distinctly his appointment to this office:—'As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will:'[5]—'This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.'[6] In this *all*, the bodies of his people, as well as their souls,

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 22.
[2] Ps. cx. 1; Isaiah xxv. 8.
[3] 1 Cor. xv. 54–57.
[4] Rev. i. 18.
[5] John v. 21.
[6] John vi. 39.

were doubtless included. That the resurrection of his people is the certain consequence of His own death and resurrection, Jesus declared, in that beautiful metaphor, —'Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.'[1] And the purpose of *his own ascension* being to prepare for the *ascension of his people* to reign in glory with him, he also declared, 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.'[2] Christ is, therefore, our FORERUNNER, who has for us entered within the vail;[3] and because *he* lives, *we* shall live also, in glory everlasting.

But not in words, only, did the Lord Jesus prove himself, while on earth, The Resurrection and the Life. He abundantly proved the same by his deeds; by raising several individuals to life, at different periods after death. Jairus's daughter had been dead but a few hours,—the widow's son was on his way to the narrow house,—Lazarus had lain in the grave 'four days already.'—All these, with equal ease, with instantaneous effect, and by his own sovereign authority, Jesus summoned back to life; saying, 'Damsel, I say unto thee arise;'—'Young man, I say unto thee, arise;'—'Lazarus, come forth.' 'He spake the word, and it was done: he commanded, and it stood fast.' And these miracles were as superior, in the manner of their performance, to the miracles wrought by Prophets and Apostles, as the acts of the Lord exceed those of his servants.

An illustrious testimony was borne to Christ, as The Resurrection, by the extraordinary fact, that 'many bodies of the saints which slept, arose, and came out of

[1] John xii. 24. [2] John xiv. 2, 3. [3] Heb. vi. 19, 20.

their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.'[1] Thus, the 'Corn of Wheat' produced an immediate harvest; the grave was forced to yield an immediate triumph to Him who, by his death and resurrection, 'hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light.'

In our own age and nation, there are comparatively few *professed* Sadducees: yet there is still much practical unbelief on the subject of the Resurrection. Even in the Christian's mind, the question of 'the fool' will sometimes secretly arise, 'How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?' Even those who delight to dwell on the state of the departed soul, departed to be with Jesus, seem, out of revenge on the body, for the inordinate share of attention it once engrossed, to withhold from it those anticipations of future glory which are its due. Doubtless, the soul is incomparably the nobler part of our being: but the body also is God's curious workmanship, formed for his glory. Both soul and body are necessary to the perfection of a human being; and God's everlasting covenant is made with both. Of this our Lord gave evidence, by adducing the covenant made with the Patriarchs, as a proof that there should be a resurrection of the body. We might have supposed, that the title assumed by JEHOVAH, 'the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,' referred more to the immortality of the soul than to the resurrection of the body; but it is to the latter that our infallible Expositor applies it; and his argument was unanswerable to the Sadducees of that age.[2]

All degrees of infidelity, on this subject, spring from the same cause to which our Lord traced it, in the Sadducees

[1] Mat. xxvii. 52, 53. [2] Mat. xxii. 23–33.

of old, viz. from '*not knowing the Scriptures, and the power of God.*'[1] That the doctrine of the Resurrection was revealed with sufficient clearness, in the Old Testament, to enable the faithful to rejoice in it, is abundantly manifest. Job, one of the most ancient believers whose history is recorded, expressed his faith in that doctrine, with a vividness which few Christians can equal, and none can excel.—'I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.'[2] David, in many of his Psalms, especially in the 16th, 17th, and 49th, dwells confidently on the prospect of a release from the grave, and a joyful rising in the likeness of God.—'As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.'—'God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave; for he shall receive me.'[3] Ezekiel was honoured with a most lively representation of the general Resurrection, in the vision of dry bones.[4]—It was predicted, in the clearest terms, by Daniel.[5]—In short, St Paul had good warrant to assert, as he did before Felix, that the Jews themselves allowed, 'that there should be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.'[6]

How inexcusable, then, are professing Christians, if they '*know not the Scriptures*,' on this subject; having, in addition to the ancient Jewish Scriptures, the clearer and more express prophecies of Christ and his Apostles. We have, in the New Testament, discoveries of this great

[1] Mat. xxii. 29.
[2] Job xix. 25–27.
[3] Ps. xvii. 15; Ps. xlix. 15.
[4] Ezek. xxxvii.
[5] Dan. xii. 2, 3.
[6] Acts xxiv. 15.

mystery, as clear as our present limited capacities could receive, and sufficiently minute to engage our deepest attention.

In the 15th of 1 Corinthians, St Paul labours to strengthen our faith in '*the power of God*' *to raise the dead*, by drawing our attention to those exercises of his Almighty Power with which we are already familiar; and conclusively argues from the less to the greater. He first draws an illustration from *vegetable* life, from the resurrection of plants.—'That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die:'—'And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be;' and yet 'God giveth to every seed *his own body*.' It is not necessary to the identity of the body that it should be composed of the self-same particles which were sown; though even this were easy to Omnipotence: but the risen body shall spring from the dead one, as truly as the full ear of corn springs from the 'bare grain.' Still more to confirm our faith in this act of Omnipotence, the Apostle reminds us of the power displayed in creating so many different kinds of *animal* substances, as are already under our observation:—'There is one kind of flesh of men, another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds. There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial.'

Since, then, we see how admirably God has provided every creature with the body fitted to its peculiar element and use, even in this transitory state; can we doubt his power, to give to his people bodies suited to that state of glory and immortality, to which, through Christ, they shall rise? The Apostle then proceeds to show that, to fit them for the life of heaven, our bodies must be, in many respects, the reverse of what they now are: that, whereas they are sown in corruption, dishonour, and weakness, they shall be raised in incorruption, glory,

and power: that whereas, even in the midst of life and health, they are but *natural* bodies, they shall be raised *spiritual* bodies: 'for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.'

The contrast between our present and our future state is thus described by our Lord himself. 'In the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven:' 'Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.'[1] And not only shall they be 'as the angels:' they shall be like the Lord of angels; for 'he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body:'[2] 'we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.'[3]

Although, therefore, 'we know not what we shall be,' we yet know enough to raise our conceptions of the power, vigour, and beauty of our future bodies, of their spirituality and glory, as high as possible. There is here no danger of excess; as we are to be equal to the angels, and to bear the image of Christ himself, as he now appears in glory.

The ascension of the saints will as surely follow their resurrection, as the ascension of Christ followed his resurrection. Those who are alive at his coming must also be changed, to fit them for the life of glory. St Paul informs us that they shall be caught up, together with their risen brethren, to meet the Lord in the air. And, having sat with him in judgment on wicked men and wicked angels, they shall ascend with him, that where he is, there they may ever be.[4]

[1] Mat. xxii. 30; Luke xx. 36. [2] Phil. iii. 21. [3] 1 John iii. 2.
[4] 1 Thes. iv. 17.

But, besides those instances of 'the power of God,' adduced in Scripture, for confirmation of this great truth, we have daily emblems and types of the resurrection, within our own observation and experience. Each morning that we rise, from an unbroken slumber of forgetfulness, inaction, and unconsciousness, we experience a type of the resurrection. Each returning Spring teems with emblems of the same, both in the vegetable and animal worlds. The apparently withered branches are clothed with fresh verdure; out of the dry scaly bulb rises the tall graceful flower, with its brilliant hues and delicious fragrance: numerous animal tribes awake from their long winter sleep: and when the warm sunshine again cheers the earth, the butterfly breaks through its narrow sepulchre; the beautiful ethereal creature wings its joyous flight, in a body totally different from that in which formerly it crept; yet still it is the same creature, the same *seed*. Surely we may say, *We* are of more value than many *butterflies*.

With what rapturous delight will the soul rejoin its long lost companion, and survey the marvellous change wrought on it since they parted! Formerly, it was a clog and hindrance; now it is a vigorous and ready helpmeet. It is true, the body of the believer becomes the servant of God, as soon as his soul is regenerate; but yet, through infirmity, and remaining carnality, it is a great hindrance to the soul in holy exercises. When the body is sick and feeble, it cramps the energies of the soul, and ties it down to earth: and even in health, how large a proportion of our time is necessarily occupied in caring for the body; in feeding, clothing, and resting it. Sleep alone engrosses nearly a third part of most men's lives; and, between the helplessness of infancy, and the infirmities of old age, how short is the period of man's prime!

But the risen and glorified body shall need no refreshment, nor cessation from the blissful work of praising and serving its Maker. Like the angels, it will rest not day and night, saying, 'Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!' and, like the angels, it may be rendered capable of services such as we have no conception of, in this our frail mortal state. It shall know neither infancy nor old age, but enjoy immortal youth; and, above all, it shall no more be an inlet to temptation; but, purified from all earthly dross, be 'a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and made meet for the Master's use.'

Let us then cease to mourn over, and dread, the dissolution of our earthly house of this tabernacle. Death is indeed repugnant to nature, and dreadful as the token of God's displeasure against sin: but it is the necessary process to sanctify, spiritualise, and glorify the tabernacle. Its ruins we may safely commit to Him, who is The Resurrection and the Life; and if we have truly embraced him as our Refuge and our Righteousness, we shall find the sting of death taken away, and fearlessly descend into the grave.

Meantime, let the thoughts of death, and of the resurrection, teach us to avoid all needless pampering of these vile bodies, which must so soon 'say to corruption, Thou art my father; to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister.'[1] Let us 'keep them under, and bring them into subjection;' and turn to good account our natural propensity to care for them, by thinking more of what they shall be, than of what they are. Let us seek to employ them now, as much as possible, in holy services, such as they shall be employed in hereafter, yielding ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God;[2]

[1] Job xvii. 14. [2] Rom. vi. 13.

and, if we be risen with Christ, let us also ascend with him, in heart and mind, seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; setting our affections on things above, not on things on the earth: and 'when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.'[1]

We conclude with some beautiful reflections of Hurrion, on the ascension of our Lord:—

'Is Christ ascended! Then how highly is our nature 'dignified and honoured! Adam had rendered it more 'vile than the beasts that perish, but Christ has raised 'it above the highest angels. After the fall, it was 'thought to be unworthy of the earthly paradise; but, 'in Christ, it is exalted at God's right hand, and fills 'the highest and most honourable seat, next his throne. 'Sin had made human nature the derision of devils, but 'Christ has made it the delight of angels, and the joy 'and glory of the redeemed for ever. The union of our 'nature to Christ's divine person, gives it a glory infi-'nitely above all conception. The continuance of that 'union is such an honour done to it, as is far above our 'highest admiration, and should make us cry out, 'Lord, 'what is man, that thou art mindful of him!' Has 'Christ, then, ascended, and do our hearts descend? 'To have our Head in heaven, and our hearts in the 'earth, is a very unbecoming separation. Did Christ 'leave the world, and shall we cleave faster to it? Did 'he ascend above it, and are we buried in the cares and 'pleasures of it? How dishonourable and displeasing 'to Christ must this be! O then, let the Christian's 'affections be above, where his Saviour is. Is Christ 'ascended? Then how willingly may the believer leave 'this world, and follow his Saviour to heaven! While

[1] Col. iii. 1–4.

'we are present in the body, we are absent from the 'Lord. How confident and willing, then, may the sin- 'cere Christian be, rather to be absent from the body, 'and present with the Lord! Heaven has a new at- 'tractive in it now; the Man Christ Jesus is there in 'all his glory. Christ's ministry in the heavenly temple, 'is infinitely preferable to the ministry and ordinances of 'the church on earth. The believer is an infinite gainer 'by exchanging the sight of Christ, through a glass dark- 'ly, for a sight of him as he is, and face to face. Christ 'thought our sight of his heavenly glory worth his pray- 'ing for, and the Christian should think it worth the 'dying for. We have been attempting to get a glimpse 'of this glory, through the glass of the Gospel, and that 'is refreshing; but O what is it to behold it with open 'face; when there shall be no veil, either upon the eye, 'or upon the object. To see the glory of the Deity 'shining through the Man Christ Jesus, must be most 'desirable. How, then, can the Christian refrain from 'earnestly longing to depart, and to be with Christ, 'which is far better?'[1]

[1] Hurrion.

ESSAY XLVIII.

THE RIGHTEOUS JUDGE—JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD.

We have at length arrived at the consideration of that awful character, in which the Lord Jesus shall terminate his Mediatorial reign. May our minds be suitably impressed and solemnized, whilst we muse upon it. May we, by God's help, approach the subject, not with speculative curiosity, but with a recollection of our own personal concern in it; as those who must ourselves stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.

This subject is closely connected with the one we last considered. For, what is it that invests the Resurrection with such unutterable importance, but this, that after it cometh The Judgment. This is the purpose for which 'all that are in the graves shall come forth,' that they that have done good may come to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.[1] The resurrection of the wicked, 'to shame and everlasting contempt,' is no less certain, by God's word, than that of the saints 'to everlasting life.'[2]

The office of Christ, which we are now to study, is

[1] John v. 28, 29. [2] Dan. xii. 2.

also closely connected with the one we last considered. St Paul adduces his resurrection, as the pledge of his judicial coming, saying, 'God hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.'

The apostles, while witnessing their Master's ascension, received from angels the intimation of his second coming. 'This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.'[1] They, therefore, joined with their testimony to his resurrection, the revelation of his coming again to judge the world. While bearing witness to their having eaten and drunk with him, after he rose from the dead, they declared also, that God commanded them to testify that it is He who was ordained of God to be THE JUDGE OF QUICK AND DEAD.[2]

The belief in a future state of rewards and punishments is generally implanted in the conscience of man; as we see by its having a place in most systems of heathen divinity; and, from the earliest ages of the church, such a state has been clearly revealed, and universally expected, by all who believed the word of God. Moses declared, 'The Lord shall judge his people.'[3] Abraham styles God, 'The Judge of the whole earth.'[4] Job had awful impressions of him, under that character.[5] Hannah, in her song of praise, rejoices that 'the Lord shall judge the ends of the earth.'[6] The Psalms abound in exulting anticipations of the same grand event; they tell us, 'God is a righteous Judge.' 'He shall judge the people righteously.' 'With righteousness shall he judge

[1] Acts i. 11. [2] Acts x. 40–42. [3] Deut. xxxii. 36.
[4] Gen. xviii. 25. [5] Job viii. 3; xxxiv. 11. [6] 1 Sam. ii. 10.

the world, and the people with equity.'[1] In the 50th Psalm especially, the day of judgment is set forth with great solemnity; in its awful accompaniments, in the terror with which it shall strike the wicked, and in the safety and blessedness which, even then, will be the portion of the saints. In the 1st Psalm also, is clearly revealed, the separation hereafter to be made between the righteous and sinners. Solomon, in the book of Ecclesiastes, has left awful warnings of an approaching period of judgment. In irony he urges the young man to rejoice in his youth, to walk in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes; but, in solemn earnestness, he adds, 'But know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee unto judgment.'[2] And he enforces the fear of God, and the keeping of his commandments, by this tremendous sanction, 'For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.'[3]

In the writings of the prophets, we find many fearful announcements of God's coming in judgment, most of them, no doubt, referring primarily to minor events; many of them already fulfilled, in the various chastisements inflicted on Israel, and in the destruction of Jerusalem; some of them, probably, to be fulfilled in the troubles preceding the Millennium. Yet the language of many of these predictions can be fully and literally verified, only, in the great day of final judgment, of which, all preceding judgments put together will form but a feeble type.[4]

It remained, however, for Christ himself, clearly to make known the realities of a judgment to come. In his own words, and in those of his apostles, he has unequivocally declared the Person of the Judge, the circum-

[1] Ps. xciv. 2; xcvi. 10; xcviii. 9. [2] Eccl. xi. 9. [3] Eccl. xii. 14.
[4] See Zeph. i. 14–18; Joel ii. 2–11; iii. 11–16; Nahum i. 2–8.

stances that shall attend his coming, the momentous results of his decisions, and the principles on which those decisions will be awarded. *First*, then, let us consider *the Person of the Judge.* It had been declared, in the Old Testament, that 'God is Judge himself;' but no clear intimation had been given as to the Person in the Godhead who should execute this solemn office. Jesus, however, removed all doubt on the subject, by declaring, 'The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son.' 'The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of Man.'[1] And he desired his hearers not to marvel at this; for his executing the office of Judge, would be the appropriate continuation of that authority whereby he was to summon the dead from their graves, and the fit termination of his Mediatorial reign. In communing with his disciples, Jesus distinctly foretold the acts of the judgment-day, as his own individual acts, though in perfect union with the Father. He told them, 'The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.'[2] And in that most awful and magnificent description of the judgment, given in Matthew xxv., the Son of Man is sole arbiter of the destinies of an assembled world. He is King, not of his own people alone, but of all nations. The throne of glory is His. The separation of the two classes is His act. He pronounces the sentence of blessedness on the one class, and the sentence of condemnation on the other; and proves the justice of both sentences, with special reference to the respective conduct of each class towards Himself. Even while standing as a condemned criminal, before the High Priest, Jesus declared his future coming, as Judge of the Earth :—'Hereafter

[1] John v. 22, 27. [2] Mat. xvi. 27.

shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'[1]

The Apostolic Epistles contain many clear attestations to this great truth, 'that God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ;' that 'we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.'[2] And in the book of Revelation we find awful descriptions of the scene then to be displayed, in all of which, the wrath of the LAMB forms the most tremendous feature.

No office of Christ more clearly proves his Divinity than this one; for how could he make an infallible separation between the righteous and the wicked; determine the exact portion of reward or punishment due to each; according to their respective advantages or disadvantages, temptations, obligations, gifts, and graces; and bestow it accordingly; unless he were possessed of omniscience, omnipotence, infinite wisdom, power, and goodness?

But while the Divine nature of Christ is clearly proved by his appointment to the office of Judge, it is the conjunction of his Human nature with his Divine that peculiarly fits him for the office. He himself said, that the Father gave him authority to execute judgment, 'because he is the Son of Man;' not only in reward of his obedience and sufferings as Man, but to manifest, to the assembled universe, the holiness and justice of the transactions of that awful season. Then will it be seen how highly the Father 'delights to honour' him whom once it pleased him to bruise;[3] then will be removed from the human nature of Christ, every possible imputation of weakness or guilt; when He who once was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers, was dumb,—who was mock-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 64. [2] 2 Cor. v. 10; Rom. xiv. 10; Jude xiv. 15.
[3] Is. liii. 10.

ed, reviled, tortured, and put to death as a malefactor, by insolent worms,—shall sit in judgment on those very worms, and pronounce their irrevocable doom.

The appearance of the Almighty Judge in *Human* form will speak volumes of terror to his enemies, and of encouragement to his friends, even before he shall pronounce their respective sentences. To his *enemies* it will say, Behold the Lamb! the Son of God! who died for sinners, and whose blood you were so often entreated to sprinkle upon your guilty souls! He became 'a Man of Sorrows,' and was made 'a Curse,' that all who should believe in him might not perish, but have everlasting life. His mouth was full of the tenderest invitations, to you, and to all sinners without exception, that you might come unto him and live: he even complained that you would not come; and after his ascension, he employed his ministering servants to reiterate his invitations and expostulations: he gave you his word, he strove with you by his Spirit; he did all but compel you to come unto him,—*but ye would not.*[1] Ye despised and rejected him, because of his lowliness and condescension: ye hid your faces from him, and shut him out of your hearts, when, as a gracious Saviour, he stood and knocked at the door: ye would not endure any self-denial nor show any kindness, for his sake, while it was in your power, and now it is *too late.* Those lips which so tenderly invited you to *come*, must now open to bid you *depart;* He who so long sat on a throne of *grace*, is now seated on the throne of *judgment;* and that very *Humanity* which might have been your *salvation*, must now, through your unbelief and impenitence, be your *destruction.*

How different will be the feelings of the *righteous* on

[1] John v. 40.

beholding, for the first time with their bodily eyes, 'God manifest in the flesh,' him whom, having not seen, they had loved! Even to them, the scene must indeed be awful beyond conception; yet they can entertain no fears for their personal safety; especially those of them whose spirits have already been resting with Jesus, and have tasted the joys above. To those who shall be alive at his coming, the shock must be great; but the first glimpse of the Judge will dissipate every remaining fear. For, who is he that wields the dread sword of justice? Is he not their Advocate, their Surety, their Friend? Did he not take flesh and blood in order to become their Brother, their Husband, and Head? Have they not known him, and been known by him, as their Shepherd? Has he not, as their High Priest, offered an all-sufficient sacrifice for their sins, and been ever living to make intercession for them? Has he not taught them as their Prophet, and ruled and defended them as their King? And can he now forsake them, when they most need his protection? Need they fear the sword in His hands? No; in that day they shall say, 'Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad, and rejoice in his salvation.'[1]

2*d*, *Circumstances attending the coming of the Judge.*—The Lord Jesus has not merely declared the stupendous fact, that he will come to judge the world; he has confirmed this declaration, by adding many circumstances which shall attend the event, suited to arrest our attention, to engage our imagination, and to awaken our drowsy sensibilities. Were it not that habit has rendered the detail of those circumstances familiar to our minds, we

[1] Is. xxv. 9.

could not but be struck with their awful grandeur. How different will be the Second coming of the Son of Man from his First coming! He came, then, unattended and alone, helpless, obscure, unknown. But he shall come again, in his own glory, in the glory of the Father, and with ten thousand times ten thousand of his saints and angels. None shall then be able to mistake him, for 'every eye shall see him;' he shall be revealed from heaven in flaming fire, and shall shine as the lightning, from the east even unto the west. Tremendous signs and sounds, of which we can now form no idea, will announce the approach of 'the consummation of all things;' 'signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.'[1] 'As often,' says Jerome, 'as I consider that day, my 'whole body trembles; whether I eat or drink, or 'whatsoever I do, I think I have ever in my ear the 'sound of that terrible trumpet, *Arise ye dead, and* '*come to judgment.*'

How vain will then be proved all those things on which men are now building their confidence! 'Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath.' Natural strength, and the force of arms, shall then also prove utterly vain; 'for the great day of the Lord is near, it is near, and hasteth greatly, even the voice of the day of the Lord: the mighty man shall cry there bitterly.' It shall be 'a day of the trumpet and alarm against the fenced cities, and against the high towers.'[2] The whole visible frame

[1] Rev. i. 7; 2 Thes. i. 7, 8; Matt. xxiv.; Luke xxi.

[2] Zeph. i. 14–16.

of nature will be dissolved; the elements shall melt with fervent heat. 'All the host of heaven shall be dissolved, and the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll; and all their host shall fall down, as the leaf falleth off from the vine, and as a falling fig from the fig-tree.'[1] What will then become of those who have been making the world their home, and leaning upon earthly props and earthly friends? They have now to do with *One Being* alone. One all-engrossing object banishes every other. This object is 'a great white throne,'[2] and Him that sits on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven are fleeing away, and no place is found for them. Oh! what refuge or hiding-place can then avail to shelter the appalled sinner? In vain will he say to the rocks and mountains, 'Fall on me, and hide me from the face of Him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb;'[3] for the mountains themselves shall be crushed in the universal wreck. He can no longer hide himself from the overwhelming eye of the Judge; not a spot is left whereon to rest his foot. 'It will be in vain to 'look about for help; all the world cannot rescue one 'soul: there is no avoiding by appeal, for it is the last 'judgment; nor by rescue, for they shall be compelled; 'nor by flight, for there is no escaping; nor by en-'treaties, for the Judge is inexorable.'[4]

But for the saints, even at this awful crisis, there will be a sure Refuge, Harbour, and Place of Repair; for, when the Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem, and the heavens and the earth shall shake: the Lord himself will be the *Hope* of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel.[5]

[1] Is. xxxiv. 4.
[2] Rev. xx. 11.
[3] Rev. vi. 15, 16.
[4] From Manton in Hurrion.
[5] Joel iii. 15, 16; See margin on *Hope*.

3. *Momentous Decisions of the Judge.*—All this, however, is but introductory to the great transactions of 'the Day of Decision.' We have now to study those transactions, with their momentous results. When the trumpet shall be heard with a great sound, an eternal separation shall be made, between those who, on earth, were as closely connected, as the wheat with the chaff, growing on the same stalk; as the wheat and the tares, springing up in the same field; as faithful and unfaithful servants, working in the same house; as good and bad fishes, caught in the same net; as sheep and goats feeding on the same mountain. At present, the distinction between the two classes is too little discernible: the godly have so many imperfections and inconsistencies, and many of the ungodly are so amiable and plausible, that, to a human judge, the task of separating them would be impossible. But He that searcheth the hearts cannot be at a loss, nor mistake, as to the due portion of a single soul before him. He shall send forth his servants, the angels, to sever the wicked from among the just; saying, 'Put ye in the sickle; for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the press is full, the fats overflow; for their wickedness is great.'[1] Then shall the wicked be 'cast away,' as bad, corrupt fish; 'burned with fire,' as the chaff, and the tares; 'cast into outer darkness,' as unprofitable servants; 'set on the left hand' of the Judge, as the goats. But the just shall then be 'gathered,' as the valued property of Christ, as wheat into the garner, as jewels to be set in a crown, as faithful servants to be honoured and rewarded.[2]

The Judge, by a great variety of emblems, has laboured to convince men of the awful misery and everlasting du-

[1] Matt. xiii. 49; Joel iii. 13. [2] Matt. xiii. 48, 40; xxv. 30, 33.

ration of his punishments; and of the inconceivable blessedness and eternal duration of his rewards. On the one hand, he speaks of 'shame and everlasting contempt,'—'everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,'—'the wine of the wrath of God, poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation,'—'a treasure of wrath laid up,'—'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish,'—'outer darkness, where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth,'—'the worm that dieth not, and the fire that is not quenched,'—'a lake of fire, burning with brimstone,'—'the resurrection of damnation,'—'everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.'[1]

On the other hand, the Judge presents 'glory, and honour, and immortality, eternal life,'—'a crown of righteousness,'—'a crown of glory that fadeth not away,'—'an incorruptible crown,'—the inheritance of a kingdom,—'a right to the Tree of Life,' and constant access to the Fountain of the water of Life,—'rivers of pleasure at God's right hand,'—entrance through the gates into the city, which shall have no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb shall be the light thereof.[2]

4. *Principles on which the decisions will be awarded.*—So stupendous, then, being the results of the Judgment-Day, how immensely important is it, to every human being, clearly to understand the principles on which its

[1] Dan. xii. 2; 2 Thes. i. 9; Rev. xiv. 10; Rom. ii. 5, 9; Matt. xxv. 30; Mark ix. 44, 46, 48; Rev. xix. 20; John v. 29; Matt. xxv. 41.

[2] Rom. ii. 7; 2 Tim. iv. 8; 1 Pet. v. 4; 1 Cor. ix. 25; Luke xii. 32; Rev. xxii. 14; xxi. 6; Ps. xvi. 11; xxxvi. 8; Rev. xxi. 22, 23; xxii. 14.

awards will be given! And since the Judge himself has condescended to forewarn us of those principles, how carefully should we study them!

The first thing that strikes the attentive reader, in studying the grounds of acquittal and of condemnation, to be brought forward at the great day, is their *apparent* inconsistency with the doctrines of free grace, and of salvation by faith alone. In the descriptions given of that awful trial, we find but few intimations of the sovereign will and choice of God, as the efficient *cause*, nor of faith in the atonement and righteousness of Christ, as the effectual *means*, of a sinner's justification and salvation. All seems to depend upon his own works; upon whether he have *done good*, or *done evil*,[1] *served God*, or *served him not*. Every man is to receive the things done in the body, *according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad.[2] Now, at first sight, and viewed apart from the rest of Scripture, these declarations do seem to give countenance to the sentiments of those who say, It is of little consequence what a man *believes*, provided he *act* aright. Why insist so constantly upon simple faith, and a change of heart; when we are so positively told that '*by works* a man is justified, and not by faith only?'[3] And, as to the decrees of God, and his electing and converting grace, we find no mention of these; but simply of a man's own conduct, as the ground of his reward or punishment.—And, not only do these declarations of personal retribution seem to warrant the confidence of the self-righteous; they seem also to warrant the fears of the desponding. For, says the broken-hearted penitent, If we are to be judged by our *works*, according to the straight rule of God's commandments, oh! how shall I stand? I have never done any thing really good;

[1] John v. 29. [2] 2 Cor. v. 10. [3] James ii. 24.

my best actions deserve the wrath of God, in their motive, their end, and their performance; my comparative good is mixed with so much real evil, that I am quite at a loss whether to class myself among them that are *doing good*, or *doing evil*. If a certain measure of obedience be necessary for acquittal at the bar of Christ, how shall I know when I have reached that measure? How can I ever attain a good hope of eternal life, or even a faint hope of escaping the wrath to come? Besides (adds such a one), I have been taught in the Bible, and it is my only hope, that 'a man is justified *by faith*, *without the deeds of the law*;'[1] that '*by grace* we are saved, through faith; and that not of ourselves,—not of works.'[2] I have been leaning my whole confidence on the finished work of my Redeemer; trusting to his gracious assurance, 'he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation;'[3] but if, after all, I am to be judged by my own righteousness, what is the use of my faith? How can I look forward, without dismay, to death, judgment, and eternity?

It must be confessed, there is much plausibility in both these arguments: yet both spring from partial and confused views of Scripture truth; and the examination of them will lead to many useful lessons in doctrine and practice.

First, let those who are trusting in their own good works, for acceptance, take the trouble to examine what constitutes *a good work* in the sight of God; and they will find it very different from that which is so called by men. In the first place, no work can be *good* that does not flow from *faith in Christ;* for 'without faith it is impossible to please God;' and the first work God

[1] Rom. iii. 28. [2] Eph. ii. 8, 9. [3] John v. 24.

requires of sinners, is to believe on his Son: 'This is the work of God,' said the Saviour, 'that *ye believe* on him whom he hath sent.' Then, a good work must be done *in obedience to God's command*, from a desire to do the will of our Father in heaven: it must have the *glory of God for its end*, and be done *in the name of Christ*. 'Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God;'—'and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Then again, by the *works* which are to be judged at the great day, we are not to understand the outward acts merely, but the whole character, including thoughts, words, and deeds. It is 'He which *searcheth the reins and hearts*,' who will 'give to every one according to his works;' the *secrets* of men are to be judged in that day; 'the Lord will both bring to light *the hidden things of darkness*, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and *then* shall every man have praise of God.'[1] And, 'By thy *words* thou shalt be justified, and by thy *words* thou shalt be condemned.'[2] Even in that portion of Scripture, where our Lord seems to rest the whole decision on the performance or omission of one branch of moral duty,—that of alms-giving; he shows distinctly that the *inward motive* which prompted, or did not prompt, to the discharge of that duty, was the decisive test.[3] For, what is it that distinguishes the benevolence so highly honoured by our future Judge, from that condemned as worthless by his servant Paul,[4] but that the one *springs from love to Christ*, and the other *does not?* Now, love to Christ can flow only from a sense of his love to us; it is only they 'to whom much is forgiven,' who can

[1] Rev. ii. 23; Rom. ii. 16; 1 Cor. iv. 5.
[2] Matt. xii. 37.
[3] Matt. xxv. 31–46.
[4] 1 Cor. xiii.

'love much;' and it must be wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit. None, therefore, can show such laborious, expensive, and self-denying love to the poor, *for Christ's sake*, and *because they are his brethren*, as is described in Matthew xxv., but those who are penitent, believing, renewed, and sanctified. This branch of duty, then, forms a very proper and sure evidence of an interest in Christ; and it will be very suitably adduced, on the great day, as a test of character which was *visible to the world*, as well as to the All-seeing God.

But many other tests are mentioned in Scripture, as distinguishing the righteous in the great day of account. They will be proved such as have *known God*, and *obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*,—such as are *saints*, *faithful servants*, who have waited for the coming of their Lord, and *loved the appearing of Christ.*[1] *To do good*, then, does not mean to perform a certain amount of benevolent deeds, from whatever motive. Many, from various circumstances, have not the power nor the means literally to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and visit the sick. Many are not given time, between their conversion and their death, to perform any such deeds. While, on the other hand, men may give all their goods to feed the poor,[2] and yet be placed at the left hand of the Judge. But *to do good* means to acquiesce in God's plan of saving sinners, so as truly to believe and repent; to have such a constraining sense of Redeeming Love, as will produce a habitual desire to please and obey God, and to be conformed to his image, in thought, speech, and action; and will show itself, as opportunity and ability permit, in love to the bodies and souls of men, especially to them that belong to Christ. Finally, every

[1] 2 Thes. i. 8, 10; Matt. xxv. 14–30; Luke xii. 35–48; 2 Tim. iv. 8.
[2] 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

one who possesses this character, will be so far from glorying in it, that he will be astonished at the mention of any thing *he* has done, as in any sense worthy of approval by his Judge.[1] They, therefore, who *trust in* their good works, condemn themselves, by exhibiting a character contrary to that of the righteous, as described in Matthew xxv.

The objection raised against the doctrine of Election, from reference to the Scripture descriptions of the Judgment, vanishes on nearer inspection. For, who are they, whom the Judge welcomes to the inheritance of the kingdom? They are those *for whom it was prepared from the foundation of the world.*[2] Who are they that escape being cast into the lake of fire? They are those who are found *written in the Lamb's Book of Life.*[3] But for this Book, the secret love and choice of God, through Christ, not one of our fallen race could escape from the charges contained against us in the other books, the Book of the Law, and the Book of Conscience, which must also be opened on 'that day.' Nor is it any refutation of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone, that the decisions of the great day will be pronounced, according to the *evidences* of our faith, which were visible and approved by man, rather than according to the secret principles and motives of the heart, which were known only to God. This will be necessary, for the purpose of manifesting to the assembled universe, the justice of our God.

We have now answered, to the best of our ability, the *boastings of the self-righteous.* But the *fears of the timid* are more difficult to answer, because they arise

[1] Matt. xxv. 37–39. [2] Matt. xxv. 34.

[3] Rev. xx. 12–15; xxi. 27.

from causes of opposite natures;—either from sinful compliances, and want of a close walk with God, or from looking too exclusively at their own sinfulness, without lively exercise of faith in the Saviour. To the fearful Christian, we would say, You are not to be judged by the Old Covenant of Works, of which perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience was the condition;—were that still in force, not one of our race could escape the just condemnation of God. But if you are in Christ, you are to be judged 'according to the Gospel,'[1] according to the Covenant of Grace, the glory of which is, that Christ has wrought a full, perfect, and all-sufficient righteousness for his people; and even when sitting as Judge, he will still be 'JEHOVAH THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS.'

At the same time, we dare not, by a sort of fallacious, spiritual chemistry, mingle the doctrines of Scripture in such proportions, as to neutralize one set by another. True spiritual chemistry does not require, and will not stoop to, such fallacies. It mingles the seemingly opposite ingredients in such proportions, as to preserve to each its proper character and tendency, as in the Bible itself. While, therefore, we cling to the righteousness of Christ, as our only ground of justification, both now, and when placed at his awful tribunal, and reject with abhorrence all our own filthy righteousnesses, when they would presume to mingle with His; we nevertheless maintain, that there is a certain character and course of conduct, absolutely necessary to salvation;—that although our holiest actions cannot contribute in the least to our acquittal, as *meritorious*, they are yet indispensable as *evidences* of our interest in the Covenant of Grace. And if we now possess few distinctive marks of the fol-

[1] Rom. ii. 16.

lowers of Christ, we may justly doubt on which hand of the throne he will set us at the great day. We see, in the evidences to be then brought forward, merciful admonitions of the necessity for watchfulness, faithfulness, and diligence, in every appointed duty. We see in them warrants to conclude, that our comfortable assurance of future bliss, and also the degree of that bliss which we shall enjoy, must be in proportion to our present obedience and conformity to Christ. And let those who may charge us with legality for this sentiment, first answer the declarations of our Lord and his Apostles; such as in the Parable of the Talents, where each servant's *reward was proportioned to his improvement of his trust;*[1] such as, 'He which *soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly;* and he which *soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully.*'[2] According to this view, the fears of the Christian may require, not to be soothed, but deeply probed; that he may ascertain whether they do not spring from careless walking, conformity to the world, want of self-denial in the service of Christ, indolence in the use of means, want of liberality to the poor; —in short, from the want of a holier and more decidedly Christian conversation. And these causes, alas! abound in many who yet possess some true knowledge, faith, and other graces.

But while *stimulants* are needed in some cases, *cordials* are needed in others. The fearful believer may be 'walking in all good conscience before God,' diligently and faithfully acting up to his light; and yet, for want of clearer views of the Gospel, and more simple and lively exercises of faith, he may be weighed down to the earth under a sense of his unworthiness and guilt, and

[1] Luke xix. 12-26. [2] 2 Cor. ix. 6.

tremble exceedingly at the thought of having to give account of himself to God. To such a one we would say, Do you think it possible that the Lord, faithful and true, would encourage you to rely on one ground of justification here, and try you by another hereafter? Has not Jesus given you repeated tokens of his pardon since you first fled for refuge to his Cross? And can you suppose that he will bring you into judgment for those lamented sins which he has already forgiven? After assuring you, that 'there is *now no condemnation* to them that are in Christ Jesus,' can he *bring you into condemnation?* Has he not, in many ways, given you tokens of reconciliation to God; by shedding abroad the love of God in your heart, by causing you to delight in serving and communing with God, by honouring you perhaps as his instrument in doing *some* good, though much less than you desire, by infusing into your mind some likeness to himself in your affections, tastes, and pursuits? In short, has he not made you 'a new creature?' Although your evidences fall far short of what you desire, still you cannot, in truth, deny that they are sufficient to prove your union to Christ. Has he then brought you into such close and endeared relations to himself, and will he at last disown you? Has he been ever living to make intercession for you, and will he leave you in that important crisis to plead your own cause? 'Christ has advised his people to buy 'of him white raiment, that the shame of their naked-'ness may not appear; and shall this shame appear 'after they are thus clothed? Shall the Church be pre-'sented in that day by Christ "without spot," and yet 'will he expose all her spots to public view? Is not 'Christ's merit a sufficient covering to hide all his people's 'sins? Christ's satisfaction takes away the charge of

'guilt; his obedience answers the demand of righteous-
'ness; and so the believer will stand *rectus in curia*,
'blameless in court. Has God said, all the transgressions
'of the believer, that he hath committed, shall not be men-
'tioned to him; and yet will he himself make a repetition
'of them before the whole world?'[1] It is impossible. Discard, therefore, your gloomy fears, which are dishonourable to your Lord, as well as uncomfortable to yourself. It is true, the question may still remain, Am I a believer? This can be answered only by a man's own conscience. There is no boundary line to define exactly the measure of holiness and obedience necessary to prove true faith and union with Christ. Had such a line existed, it would have produced the obedience of a slave, not that of a free-born child. As it stands, the question is calculated to awaken a salutary fear of coming short, and a determination to keep on the safe side; not inquiring *how little* we *may* safely do for Christ, but *how much* we *can* do.

After all, we must confess some difficulty remains, in the reward of the saints being represented as *due* to them by the *justice* of God. We find no difficulty in acquiescing in his justice in the punishment of the wicked; but how the infinite rewards of eternity can be the *just* portion of any fallen sinner, is not so easily understood, by those who know any thing of the desert of sin, and the corruption of the heart, even in believers. And yet this is frequently stated in Scripture. St Paul says, '*God is not unrighteous*, to forget your work and labour of love.'[2] He quotes the *righteousness* of God as pledged to recompense, not only *tribulation* to *persecutors*, but *rest* to *his people*.[3] And he anticipates his own crown of righteousness, not directly from the mercy and

[1] Hurrion. [2] Heb. vi. 10. [3] 2 Thes. i. 6, 7.

free bounty of God in Christ, but because he had 'fought a good fight, and kept the faith.'[1] A reference to the terms of the Covenant of Grace, however, clears up this difficulty. Paul knew well that, as a sinner, he was *justly condemned* by the law; and yet he knew that, as a believer, he should be *justly acquitted* and *rewarded* by the Gospel. This reward will be in perfect *justice to Christ*, the Covenant-head of his people, because he has purchased it by his inestimable righteousness and atonement; and it will also be in *equity* and *faithfulness* to believers themselves, because in accordance with the promises of God, to reward their services done in his Son's name. Still, the reward will be so entirely *of grace*, in respect of us or our deservings, that, though according to justice and faithfulness, it yet involves a blessed paradox, it will be according to *the Justice of Grace.*

When, after even this slight survey of the solemnities of Judgment and Eternity, we return to view the world around us, we are involuntarily led to exclaim, *Surely men do not believe these things*, or it is impossible they could so waste and abuse the short season allowed them to flee from eternal misery, and secure eternal bliss. Some, indeed, avow their disbelief of eternal punishment, and urge the *mercy* of God to contradict his *justice* and *truth;* arguing, that he is too benevolent a Being to doom any of his creatures to everlasting woe. But has God ever yet denounced judgment, and failed to execute it? Has he not, in the curse inflicted on Adam,—in the 'flood brought upon the world of the ungodly,'—in the cities turned to ashes,—in the destruction of Jerusalem,—fulfilled to the utmost his awful

[1] 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.

threats? And, besides the tremendous proofs of his justice, of which Earth has been the scene, we are informed, for our warning, of still more tremendous proofs of that justice, towards a higher order of beings than ourselves; for 'God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.'[1]

Oh! then, let no man run the awful risk of incurring God's fiery indignation, by listening to such presumptuous doubts. Even on the *possibility* of its being true, a wise man would be prepared for it. And do we not at times hear, in the dying desperation of an impenitent transgressor, incontestable evidence that the never-dying worm is no fable?

But the number of those who avowedly disbelieve in a future Judgment is small, compared with the multitudes who, professing to believe it, yet show, by their daily walk and conversation, that their impressions of it are but faint and transient. We speak not of the flagrantly vicious, the openly profane, and the violators of human laws. *Their* condemnation, dying impenitent, is too obvious to require demonstration. None who believe in a Divine Government, and a future Retribution at all, can doubt that 'the wicked,' in this sense of the term, 'shall be turned into hell.' But, alas! many overlook the other clause of the verse, '*and all the nations that forget God.*'[2] All, who, however moral, respectable, and amiable, are living in habitual forgetfulness of their Maker, of their obligations and their responsibility to him, and all, whose happiness would suffer no diminution, were they told, 'There is no God,' are involved in this awful sentence.

We, who know something of the 'terror of the Lord,'

[1] Peter ii. 4. [2] Ps. ix. 17.

would most affectionately seek to 'persuade men' to examine for themselves the grounds of condemnation revealed by the Judge himself. There is ignorance of God, and disobedience to the Gospel, unfruitfulness, neglect of known duty, idolatry whether outward or secret, deceit in any form, covetousness, omission of benevolent deeds for the sake of Christ, and many other sins, little thought of by man. Above all, the sins of unbelief and impenitence are denounced by the Judge, as deserving and treasuring up more intolerable woe, for those who have been favoured with Gospel-light, than the worst crimes can bring upon the less favoured.[1] As to the fate of the Heathen, including all who have not had the means of religious instruction, nor the knowledge of a Saviour, the Bible does not gratify our curiosity. It could not have availed them from whom the Gospel is hidden. But we may be sure that, if not saved through an unknown Saviour, they will at least meet a doom far 'more tolerable' than that of those who, seeing the Light, loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Again, we ask, Is there, in the world in general, and even among them who are trusting to their own works, in whole or in part, for justification and future reward, any appearance of that carefulness, and diligence, and abstaining from evil, which might reasonably be expected from immortal creatures, sowing the seeds of their everlasting condition?—And, with shame we would ask, Is there, among the children of God, a rich abundance of those fruits, which, though they know, are but evidences of salvation, they ought to be laying up against the great day, to prove their sure

[1] 2 Thes. i. 8, 9 ; Mat. xxv. 30 ; Luke xii. 47 ; James iv. 17 ; Col. iii. 5, 6 ; Rev. xxii. 15 ; Mat. xxv. 41–46 ; xi. 20–24 ; John viii. 24 ; xv. 22–24.

title to the kingdom?—Alas! the doubts as to their own state, entertained by many believers, and the faintness of 'the mark in their foreheads,' in the sight of the world, prove how negligent they are in making their calling and election sure. Even to the holiest and most watchful, a frequent remembrance of the Judgment is very salutary and needful, to enliven their gratitude for deliverance from the bottomless pit, to rouse their concern for the souls of perishing sinners every where, and to urge them to efforts and prayers for their rescue.

Finally, may we all so firmly believe in Jesus Christ, as all our Salvation, and so faithfully walk in holy obedience before him, as to be able to say with the Apostle, 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.'

ESSAY XLIX.

ALL IN ALL—PORTION—INHERITANCE.

THE last great act of his administration being performed, whereby all his enemies shall be for ever put under his feet, and all his friends exalted to a share of his own glory, 'then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that did put all things under him, that God may be All in All;' that, as Christ, God-Man, has been, during earth's eventful history, ALL IN ALL to the redeemed, so thenceforward, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, may be, throughout eternity, their ALL IN ALL.

The end, however, is not yet come. Christ has not yet delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father. His mediatorial reign is still in force; and it is through him alone that sinners can safely approach the Divine Majesty, or draw comfort from any of the Divine perfections. Let us, therefore, as the proper conclusion of this train of meditations, view the Lord Jesus Christ as ALL IN ALL to his people.

The passage of Scripture where this title is most prominent, is Colossians iii. 11. The apostle, contrasting 'the old man,' which believers have put off, with 'the new man,' which they have put on, says, in reference to the latter, that 'there is neither Greek nor Jew, circum-

cision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL.' Christ dwelling in a man, is *all* that is necessary to salvation; all outward distinctions among believers, therefore, whether of nation, of civilization, of ceremonial observances, or of earthly condition, are lost in this one grand point of union, *that Christ is in them all;* that he dwells in them by his Spirit of light, of holiness, and peace; that they are all temples of the Holy Ghost, and have Christ dwelling in their hearts, by faith; and are, therefore, all equally heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ. They also *take Christ as their* ALL; finding in him a rich and abundant supply of all things needful for their holiness and happiness, both here and hereafter.

A practical lesson seems implied in this passage, viz. that, as *Christ*, dwelling *in* a man, is *all* that is necessary to salvation, so it should be *all* that is necessary to brotherly affection; that the mutual bond which secures our everlasting union, should be sufficient to unite us now, notwithstanding many differences in minor points.

Another passage in the same Epistle, declares in few, but most comprehensive words, the riches of the glory of Christ, and his all-sufficiency for his people's wants. 'In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and ye are complete in him.'[1] In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead, not only by essential Deity, but *bodily*, in human form, as 'God manifest in the flesh,' as the appointed Mediator, to convey all spiritual blessings to man: 'for it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell;'[2] 'and of his fulness have all we received.'[3] 'Ye are complete in him,' saith the apostle. 'Are we enemies? He is reconciliation. Are we 'sold to sin and Satan? He is redemption. Are we

[1] Col. ii. 9, 10. [2] Col. i. 19. [3] John i. 16.

'condemned by the law? He is the Lord our Righte-
'ousness. Hath sin polluted us? He is a fountain
'opened for sin and for uncleanness. Are we lost by
'departing from God? He is the way to the Father.
'Rest is not so suitable to the weary, nor bread to the
'hungry, as Christ is to the sensible sinner. The breath
'of our nostrils, the life of our souls, is in Jesus Christ.'[1]

But, before enlarging further on the New Testament illustrations of this blessed title, let us trace it in the books of ancient Scripture, under the synonymous title, PORTION or INHERITANCE.

In this character, Jehovah was pleased to reveal himself to the saints of old. Many of them could say, 'The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.'[2] 'The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.'[3] And the Israelites had a practical illustration of the all-sufficiency of the Lord, as his people's Portion, in the appointment of the Levites, who were to have no inheritance among their brethren, because the Lord was their Part and their Inheritance. And not only did the Lord invite his ancient people to take *Him* for *their* Portion; he even condescended to claim *them* as *His* Portion, whom he had chosen, redeemed, and purchased to be his peculiar treasure. For thus God spake by Moses, 'The Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance.' 'The Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.'[4] This mutual appropriation is expressed in few, but most emphatic words, by the prophet Jeremiah. Contrasting the graven images of the heathen, with the true and living God, he says, 'The portion of Jacob is not like them: for he

[1] Flavel. [2] Lam. iii. 24. [3] Ps. xvi. 5. [4] Deut. iv. 20.

is the former of all things, and Israel is the rod of his inheritanee: the Lord of Hosts is his name.'[1] Thus the Lord of Hosts was Jaeob's portion, and Jaeob was his portion. But this mutual appropriation is still more emphatieally and eoneisely expressed in the words of the Bride, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.'[2]

It was, however, only through faith in the promised Messiah, that any Israelite could take God for *his* Portion, or devote himself to God, as a part of *His* inheritance. Ever sinee the fall, God has been an Objeet of terror and enmity to man, in proportion as man has understood the attributes of God, except as those attributes have been seen through the One Mediator. Without a Mediator, man ean neither enjoy God, nor render to Him any aeeeptable serviee. But, in Immanuel, all the Divine attributes have become the portion of believers: even those awful ones of holiness and justiee whieh, but for his interposition, must have sealed their eondemnation. And in Immanuel, also, believers are enabled to surrender themselves to God, as his purehased inheritanee, bought with a price, to glorify Him.

In the personal teaching of our Lord, we distinetly trace the mutual appropriation, expressed in the Title, Portion. In his Parables of 'the treasure hid in the field,' and 'the pearl of great priee,' Jesus deelared the surpassing and ineomparable value of those spiritual blessings whieh are laid up in Himself, and eommunieated through his gospel; their all-suffieieney to eompensate for the loss of all other things; yea, the wisdom of parting with all other things to obtain them.[3] Attendanee on his heavenly instruetions he deelared to be the 'one thing needful;' 'that good part,' whieh eould never

[1] Jer. x. 16. [2] Cant. ii. 16. [3] Mat. xiii. 44–46.

be taken from them who chose it.[1] And he exhorted his followers to seek the privileges of his kingdom, not only first, or in preference to any other portion, but, in a certain sense, to the exclusion of any other: at least, he intimated that a faithful adherence to him would, in many cases, oblige them to renounce all other things; and that whoever should be unwilling to do this was not worthy to be his disciple; for that Himself and his Cross were the only Portion to which a man might safely cling.[2]

But our blessed Master did not require such self-denial, from his followers, without promising them a rich reward, even in this life. Every one who should leave house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake, he promised should receive manifold more in this present time (that is, in solid and spiritual happiness), and in the world to come life everlasting.[3] They should have, in Christ, peace, joy, love: yea, a portion of Christ's own peace,[4] of his own joy,[5] and of that love wherewith the Father loved him.[6] And oh! how rich was the portion he promised them in a future world! While requiring them to sell all that they had, for his sake, he, at the same time, held out to them 'a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth;' 'a kingdom' reserved for them by his Father.[7]

And those who accepted Christ as *their* Portion, he graciously owned as *His* portion, his little flock, the joint and peculiar property of the Father and himself; on whom alone, of all the inhabitants of earth they could look with complacency, and for whose sake alone this rebellious world was continued in being. For they were

[1] Luke x. 42. [2] Mat. vi. 33; Luke xiv. 26–33; Mat. xvi. 24.
[3] Luke xviii. 30. [4] John xiv. 27. [5] John xv. 11.
[6] John xvii. 23, 26. [7] Luke xii. 32, 33.

the *salt* of the earth, which preserved it from total corruption; the *light* of the world,[1] which reflected some faint rays of the Sun of Righteousness, to break the surrounding gloom; and their good works and spiritual sacrifices were the only revenue of glory which arose from earth to heaven. In his last and most affecting prayer for his chosen ones, Jesus distinctly owned them as his portion, given to him by the Father; saying, 'I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.'[2]

After the great Atonement had been offered and accepted, and the way thus opened for more free and friendly communication between God and men, the people of God were enabled, by his grace, to realize more vividly the mutual appropriation of which we speak; to see and feel that in Christ they possessed all things, and that to Christ they owed all things. If the believing Patriarchs, whose views of Messiah's glory were comparatively dim and distant, yet renounced, for his sake, all the allurements of this present world, declaring plainly that they sought a better country, even an heavenly;[3] if Moses 'esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt,' because 'he had respect unto the recompense of the reward;'[4] much more might the immediate followers of Jesus take joyfully the spoiling of their goods, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance.[5] Accordingly, we find that they renounced, for His sake, wealth, reputation, liberty, and life itself; assured, that 'having nothing,' they yet in Him 'possessed all things;' that although 'poor,' they yet had in Him wherewithal

[1] Mat. v. 13, 14. [2] John xvii. 9, 10. [3] Heb. xi. 14–16.
[4] Heb. xi. 26. [5] Heb. x. 34.

to 'make many rich.'[1] Christ was their ALL IN ALL, in things temporal and spiritual, for time and for eternity.

Of this we have ample proof in the case of St Paul. He avows his resolution to know nothing save Jesus Christ and him crucified; to glory in nothing save in the cross of his Lord Jesus Christ; he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord, for whom he had suffered the loss of all things, and did count them but dung, that he might win Christ.[2] He took Christ for Wisdom, and Righteousness, and Sanctification, and Redemption, according as it is written, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'

In one magnificent sentence, St Paul includes the whole of our present subject.—'All things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.'[3] Believers are Christ's; his property, his beloved friends, his members; inseparably united to Him whom the Father hath appointed Heir of all things, and therefore joint-heirs with him in all the rich inheritance which he claims. *The gifts and services of Christ's ministers are theirs*, as far as necessary to their edification. *The world is theirs:* this seems startling; for many true disciples seem to have but a scanty portion of the world; little but its toils and cares, its griefs and disappointments: yet it is true, of the poorest and most afflicted of them, that *the world is theirs.* They have exactly that portion of it which their all-wise and bountiful Father sees best for them: were more of it needful, He who spared not his own Son would not withhold it:

[1] 2 Cor. vi. 10.

[2] 1 Cor. ii. 2; Gal. vi. 14; Philip. iii. 4–11; 1 Cor. i. 30, 31.

[3] 1 Cor. iii. 21–23.

they have a sanctified enjoyment of every thing they possess, and a sanctified privation of every thing they lack; and they know, both by God's word and their own experience, that 'all things work together for good to them that love God.' *Life is theirs;* for they are sure of its continuance, as long as is needful to finish their work, and to ripen their graces. And then, oh! how truly, *Death is theirs*, as the gate of everlasting life. *Things present*, however displeasing to flesh and blood, *are theirs*, by the blessing of God upon his own dispensations; and *things to come*, including not only all coming trials of this life, but the awful solemnities of the dying hour, of the Resurrection, and the Judgment, *are theirs* also.

The all-sufficiency of Christ is finely drawn by an old author; when, viewing him as 'The Mercy' of God, promised to the Fathers,[1] he says, 'Christ is *The Mercy*, 'emphatically so called; the peerless, invaluable, and 'matchless Mercy; because he is the prime fruit of the 'mercy of God to sinners. All other mercies, compared 'with him, are but fruits from that root, and streams 'from that fountain of mercy. Christ is *The Mercy*, be-'cause all the mercy of God to sinners is dispensed and 'conveyed through Christ to them. Christ is the me-'dium of all divine comunications, the *Channel* of grace; 'fond and vain, therefore, are all the expectations of 'mercy, out of Christ; no drop of saving mercy runs 'beside this channel. Christ is a *full Mercy*, replenish-'ed with all that answers to the wishes or wants of sin-'ners; in him alone is found whatever the justice of an 'angry God requires for satisfaction, or the necessities 'of souls require for their supply. Christ is an *unsearch-*

[1] Luke i. 72.

'*able Mercy*; who can fully express his wonderful 'name?[1] Who can tell over his unsearchable riches?[2] 'Hence it is, that souls never tire in the study or love 'of Christ, because new wonders are eternally rising out 'of him: He is a deep which no line of any created un-'derstanding, angelical or human, can fathom. Lastly, 'He is an *everlasting Mercy*, "the same yesterday, and 'to-day, and for ever." All other enjoyments are perish-'able, time-eaten things; time, like a moth, will fret 'them out; but the riches of Christ are "durable riches," 'the graces of Christ are durable graces. All the crea-'tures are flowers that appear and fade in their month; 'but this Rose of Sharon, this Lily of the Valley, never 'withers.'[3]

Looking 'beyond the narrow bounds of time,' how glorious is the inheritance of the people of God! One apostle terms it, 'a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'[4] Another calls it, 'an inheritance incorrupt-ible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away.'[5] And the value of this inheritance is exalted to the highest pitch, by its being termed, not only that of the saints, but of Christ himself; for it is 'the riches of the glory of *His inheritance in the saints*.'[6] To a true child of God, the great and surpassing object of desire, in a fu-ture state, to which he looks almost exclusively, is the enjoyment of God himself, in perfect fellowship, and un-alloyed friendship. He says, with the Psalmist, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee.'[7] The Portion to which he aspires, is that promised by the Alpha and Omega him-self,—'He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and

[1] Prov. xxx. 4. [2] Eph. iii. 8. [3] Flavel.
[4] 2 Cor. iv. 17. [5] 1 Pet. i. 3-5. [6] Eph. i. 18.
[7] Ps. lxxiii. 25.

I will be his God, and he shall be my son.'—'Behold, the tabernaele of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.'[1] What ean they want, who have God *for their own God?* who ean say, 'This God is *our* God for ever and ever: he will be our Guide even unto death;' yea, even in death, and after death; for, though their flesh and their heart must fail, God is the strength of their heart, and their portion for ever.[2]

How different is the portion of the men of the world! 'They have their portion in this life;' and they vainly think the world is theirs, if they sueeeed in amassing or preserving some of its perishing treasures, for their own enjoyment while they live, and to bequeath to their ehildren when they die; if they gain a name for learning or genius, to *immortalize* their memory, as it is ealled; if they are exalted to dignity and influenee among the great ones of the earth; or, without aspiring to great affluence, renown, or dignity, if they enjoy a eomfortable eompeteney, are esteemed by their neighbours, and surrounded by affectionate friends and relatives. Yet they have no true enjoyment of the things of this world, beeause they have not the favour of God along with them. Their eorn and wine may inerease, and they may have 'mueh goods laid up for many years,' yet is there no real gladness in their heart, for the joyful light of God's eountenanee is not lifted up upon them. The more they possess, of wealth, talents, or influenee, if not employed for God, as his stewards, the deeper will be their eondemnation. The longer they live, they do but treasure up for themselves more 'wrath against the day of wrath,

[1] Rev. xxi. 7, 3. [2] Ps. xlviii. 14; lxxiii. 26.

and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.' And, Oh! when they die, what a portion awaits them! It is thus awfully described in the book of Job! 'God shall cast the fury of his wrath upon him.—The heaven shall reveal his iniquity; and the earth shall rise up against him. The increase of his house shall depart, and his goods shall flow away, in the day of his wrath. This is the portion of a wicked man, from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God.'[1] It is thus described also in the book of Psalms, 'fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup.'[2] In the New Testament, the portion of the wicked is revealed, in terms the most awful imaginable, as that 'prepared for the devil and his angels.'[3]

With this comparative view before our eyes, of the *two portions*, one of which must be chosen by every human being who has access to the Bible, how strange and lamentable is it to see most men choosing the evil, and refusing the good! to see them panting and toiling after an inheritance in this fleeting world, while they scarcely take the trouble to inquire what is to be their inheritance for eternity! And if they could, by all their anxious toil, secure a certain measure of enjoyment, during the term of 'threescore years and ten,' their madness would not be quite so glaring; though, even then, they would be making a poor exchange indeed. But the case, as all know, is widely different. The uncertainty of all things under the sun, including their own lives, is quite proverbial. Few, comparatively, attain the longest term of man's existence; and of those few, but a small proportion succeed in their schemes for happiness; and even those *fortunate* ones, as they are styled, have not one hour of genuine happiness, because they are seeking it

[1] Job xx. 23–29. [2] Ps. xi. 6. [3] Mat. xxv. 41.

apart from God, the fountain of light, and life, and bliss. The infatuation of their choice, therefore, is beyond expression.

'How mad are they that part with Christ, the best 'of mercies, to secure and preserve any temporal, lesser 'mercies to themselves! Thus Demas and Judas gave 'up Christ, to gain a little of the world. O! soul-'undoing bargain! How dear do they pay for the 'world, that purchase it with the loss of Christ, and 'their own peace for ever![1]

These men, however, do not deliberately choose self-destruction; but, having a relish for earthly things, and none for heavenly things, they persuade themselves that it is not necessary wholly to relinquish the former, in order to secure the latter; that they may still cleave to the world, as their portion, without forfeiting their portion in heaven. They, therefore, overlook all the strict injunctions to self-denial, non-conformity to the world, heavenly-mindedness, and devotion in body and soul to the service of God, given by our Lord, and his apostles; and vainly and presumptuously think to appropriate that part of salvation which suits their carnal taste, and reject the rest; while, in return, they devote to Christ just so much of their time, talents, substance, and affections, as they think will satisfy his demands, and use all the remainder according to their own inclination. And is this to take Christ for *our* Portion, and to surrender ourselves to be *his* portion? Will He consent thus to *share* our hearts with the world? Ah! no. He has given himself to us, not in part, but wholly in his Divine and in his Human natures, with all their respective attributes; and he requires from us, in return, not a certain part, but the whole of our services, in body,

[1] Flavel.

soul, and spirit; for, in a far higher sense than the aged apostle could say to Philemon, Jesus says to us, that we owe unto him even our own selves. Are we, then, willing to take Christ for *our* Portion? The best way to ascertain this, is by putting to ourselves another question, Are we willing to be *His* portion? If so, we may well bless the Lord, who has given us counsel, and say, 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.'

We have now contemplated God our Saviour under a great variety of names and offices, of aspects and characters. We have seen that in eternal majesty he is JEHOVAH, Lord of Hosts, God over all, blessed for ever;—that in Mediatorial authority he is King of kings, and Lord of lords, Christ the Power of God and the Wisdom of God. We have seen to what a depth of humiliation he submitted, in order to accomplish the work of our Redemption; and to what a height of glory he has been exalted, in consequence of that work. We have seen that Jesus is the *only* Saviour; for in Him alone we have pardon, peace, and justification: to Him alone we can look, for life and light, for the gift of faith, for wisdom, strength, sanctification, and example: He is the only Foundation on which we can rest, the only Refuge to which we can fly; 'for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.' We have seen, also, that Jesus is a rich and *all-sufficient* Saviour: that in Him his people have 'all things:' not only all things necessary to salvation, but all things conducive to happiness: for he is their Consolation, their Hope, their Joy and Glory: He performs toward them all the tender offices of friendship and kindred: nay, so entire is their union with Christ, their

Divine Head, that they are joint-heirs with him in all that the Father has given him : for, as we have seen, in the Title last considered, all things are theirs ; for they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. By the precious Gift of his own Son, God has pledged himself freely to give us all things : and 'all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us.'

As the blessed result of these contemplations, may the Lord impress upon each of our minds a deep and lasting conviction that CHRIST IS ALL, and enable us truly to take him for ALL. And with humble, adoring gratitude, may we all exclaim,

> Blessed be God for Jesus Christ ;
> Thanks be to God for his unspeakable Gift ;

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly places, in Christ.

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

FINIS.

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